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Saudi leaks reveal new evidence in nurses case

By DANIEL MCGRODY

SAUDI newspapers yesterday disclosed apparently damning new evidence against the two British nurses accused of murdering a hospital colleague.

Diplomats were surprised at what they describe as "unprecedented leaks" of the case against Lucille McLaughlin, 31, from Dundee, and Deborah Parry, 41, from the Midlands, which they believe must have been sanctioned by the authorities.

Graphic details of how the women allegedly tried to cover up their part in the murder and their supposed separate confessions were released as part of what observers believe is an effort by the Saudis to defend their much criticised legal system.

British diplomats who expect to visit the two nurses today in the women's prison in Dhahran refused to speculate as to why the Saudi press carried detail that could have come only from the police.

The Al-Hayat newspaper reported that the women taunted 55-year-old Yvonne Gilford that she was "an old woman" no longer capable of doing her job and who was about to be dismissed from the King Fahd Military Medical College where all three worked.

One of the Britons is said to have hit the Australian theatre nurse with a teapot and then stabbed her with a kitchen knife in the back, chest and face.

The newspaper said that after the murder on December 11 the two nurses straightened furniture and wiped away fingerprints. This "explained" why investigators were able to find only one print from one of the Britons despite their admission that both were frequent visitors to Miss Gilford's bedroom in their shared flat.

Police sources are quoted about how they were told by the National Commercial Bank that the victim's

bank card was being used three days after her murder with 5,000 riyals (about £1,000) withdrawn on three successive days.

Police are said to have watched the suspects leave the hospital and take a taxi to a shopping centre where one of them went to a bank machine.

She is reported to have confessed when police arrested her and the newspaper says her alleged accomplice confessed two days later.

Saudi journalists have also been briefed by police about lurid suggestions of how a lesbian relationship or moneylending might have been the motive. It is alleged that Miss Gilford would lend money to new recruits until they received pay cheques.

Diplomats have been surprised at the interest Saudis have taken in the case. Observers have suggested that mindful of Western criticism of the fairness of its strict Sharia courts and the punishment of public beheading, the Saudis are allowing incriminating evidence to be published.

A dossier said to include confessions, forensic evidence and the testimony of other nurses has been sent to the Governor of Eastern Province who will decide the next step. He can decide whether the case goes before a Sharia court, dismiss the allegations or seek deportation.

Such is the Saudi sensitivity about its handling of this case that its Ambassador in London, Dr Ghazi Algosabi, issued a statement stressing that the women would receive a fair trial and that no confession would be regarded as valid unless given before the Islamic judges.

Should a death sentence be passed then the final judgement will rest with the victim's family. Frank Gilford, the victim's brother, said at the weekend that he might now intervene.



Jill and William Willis who died trying to rescue their pet Tara from a former gravel pit in Essex. The dog survived



Couple die in frozen lake as they try to rescue dog

By ADRIAN LEE

A MARRIED couple died yesterday after falling through ice as they ventured on to a frozen lake to try to save their dog.

Another man who went into the water in a vain attempt to reach William and Jill Willis also became trapped and was rescued by a park ranger.

The dog, a Labrador, struggled free unaided from the former gravel pit at Belhus Wood Country Park, at Aveley, near Grays, in Essex.

Mrs Willis, who was in the water for about an hour, showed signs of life but died after she was airlifted to the Whitechapel Hospital in East London. Doctors hoped to slowly warm her blood and restart her body systems which had been slowed by extreme cold. People have survived submersion in cold water for long periods but Mrs Willis died shortly after arrival.

Mr Willis, a self-employed electrician and decorator, was submerged for more than two hours and was declared dead at the scene.

Witnesses said the dog ran on to the ice where Mr Willis saw it was in trouble. He fell into nine feet of water and his wife, who tried to reach him, also became trapped. Firemen stretched an inflatable bridge — normally used in rescues from mud flats — across the ice and inched their way to the spot where the pair, both 58 and from Upminster, were last seen.

Mrs Willis was found first, standing upright, and pulled out by her clothes. She was unconscious but a doctor raised a heartbeat using electronic equipment. A police diver, PC Guy Hicks, working

in zero visibility, later found Mr Willis lying on the lake bed but, although he was given heart massage, there was no sign of life.

Peter Odell, 44, a park ranger, described how he joined the rescue effort after the alarm was raised just before 9am. "When I arrived there was a man in a lifebelt in the water up to his waist. The other two had gone under by then. I believe he had got to one of them but could not hold on. He was himself clinging to the ice but could not pull himself out. His wife helped us get a rope to him and we hauled him on to the bank. He was shaking and his hands were turning blue. We wrapped him in overalls and coats. It was wonderful to get him out. At one stage we thought we were going to lose him too. He was very brave."

The second couple were both being treated for hypothermia last night. The victims' son, Steven, said: "The whole thing has been a terrible shock. They were a very loving couple and at least they are together now. That is the only comfort we can take from it."

Mr Willis, a former Merchant Navy sailor, and his wife who have another son, Richard, had owned their pet, Tara, for about a year. "The dog was like a third son to them," said Steven Willis.

Assistant Divisional Officer Barry Cable of Essex Fire and Rescue Service said it was an all-too-familiar accident. A year ago, an 11-year-old girl, Tracey Patterson, and two would-be rescuers, Michael Mee, 48, and Jack Crawshaw, Continued on page 2, col 3

Solicitors face £25m action

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

SIXTY-FIVE solicitors' firms are being taken to the High Court over mortgage losses in an action that could eventually cost the profession up to £25 million and change the system whereby one lawyer acts for both borrower and lender in conveyancing deals.

The Bristol & West Building Society is suing over £6 million of property losses incurred between 1988 and 1991. It claims that the solicitors should have warned the society that their borrower-clients were a bad risk.

The Solicitors' Indemnity Fund, which would have to pay out on the

claims if the suit succeeded, knows of at least 80 similar cases and believes there could be up to 300 more, worth up to £25 million, awaiting the outcome of the February action.

In common with other building societies, the Bristol & West possessed hundreds of properties at the peak of the market in the late 80s, but was then unable to recoup its losses when prices plummeted.

Solicitors in conveyancing transactions act both for borrower and lender, and the main issue in the case will be what duty the lawyer has to warn mortgage companies

about their clients' financial difficulties. The court will have to decide whether failure to pass on information amounted to a breach of contract, a breach of trust or negligence.

The Bristol & West claim covers 84 transactions involving properties of varying values. The society would not discuss the action, but a spokesman said: "It is our policy to seek redress for our members where we perceive there to be negligence, recklessness or fraud."

Some of the issues raised by the action have already been aired in a Continued on page 2, col 6

Fears of new year IRA bombings

Significant changes to the membership of the army council of the Provisional IRA have added to fears that a bombing campaign is imminent. The police and M15 were surprised that there was no pre-Christmas attack and are prepared for a terrorist campaign in the new year. Everyone protected by police bodyguards have been warned that an assassination attempt is possible. Page 4

Israel 'will stay in Hebron forever'

The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, pledged that Israel would stay in Hebron permanently as he faced strong resistance from some of his ministers to a troop redeployment. Mr Netanyahu must seek the approval of the Cabinet after an agreement is signed transferring 80 per cent of Hebron to Palestinian control. Page 9

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The Times on the Internet
<http://www.the-times.co.uk>

Posy for sweet William

MOST of the flowers being clutched by a group of very young children outside Sandringham parish church yesterday were for the Queen. But not the bunch of pink carnations in the hand of 15-year-old Alex Miller: they were for Prince William (Alan Hamilton writes).

Alex hid herself among the group of 26 three and four-year olds waiting for the royal family to emerge from Sunday morning service and waited until the others had presented their posies. When the Queen asked Alex if the flowers were for her, she replied,

firmly, that they were for Prince William.

Enter the Prince of Wales, who tried to persuade Alex to hand over her posy to an intermediary, Prince Harry. But Alex stuck to her guns and her carnations until the somewhat embarrassed object of her desire was persuaded to step over and accept them personally.

"He came forward, went red, took the flowers, said thank you, and then walked away," Alex said later. "I think he is just lovely; what a marvellous boyfriend he would make."



"What a relief! For one moment I thought we were going to Charles"

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HONDA

Abortion is not an election issue, says Labour



Robertson said that Labour MPs would not be coerced

BY ANDREW PIERCE
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

A SENIOR member of the Shadow Cabinet said yesterday that Labour MPs would not be cowed by the election threat posed by a new highly organised anti-abortion movement.

George Robertson, the Shadow Scottish Secretary, became the first senior party figure to speak against the challenge posed to Labour MPs by the Pro-Life Alliance, which is planning to fight at least 50 constituencies. The alliance, buoyed by the attack on abortion yesterday by Cardinal Basil Hume, the Archbishop of Westminster, is planning to launch its manifesto in London at the end of January.

A film of an abortion during the late stages of pregnancy will be

shown. Depending on reaction to the film, the movement will decide whether to repeat the film during a party political election broadcast, which it will be granted if it fields 50 candidates.

Mr Robertson, MP for Hamilton, was saddened by the Pro-Life Alliance's decision to move abortion into the election arena. He said: "Abortion has always been seen as a critical matter of conscience. That is the way it should always remain."

He was among those who led opposition to left-wing demands in the mid-1980s to make support for abortion a mandatory party policy for every Labour candidate, irrespective of their religious and moral beliefs. He easily beat off a deselection attempt in his constituency over his stance on the issue.

Proposals by trade union leaders to restore formal links with a Tony Blair-led government were swiftly rejected by the Labour party leadership yesterday. John Edmonds, leader of the GMB Union, has drawn up an election manifesto advocating the re-establishment of a formal forum in which union leaders could engage in dialogue with Cabinet ministers and employers. Stephen Byers, Labour's employment spokesman, said: "There will be no return to the old days of beer and sandwiches at Number 10. We have no plans to set up any formal machinery of government of the type proposed by John Edmonds. We are not going back. We are going forward."

Mr Robertson said MPs who supported a woman's right to choose would not be cowed. "The Labour Party is not going to be coerced. Individual Labour MPs are not going to be coerced into subverting their individual judgment by these sort of tactics. They will not work."

The only member of the Shadow

Cabinet who is not targeted is Tom Clarke, a Roman Catholic who is spokesman on the disabled. Tony Blair who opposes abortion but has never voted against it in the Commons, is unlikely to be opposed because the Tory and Liberal Democrat candidates in his constituency are pro-life supporters.

Clare Short, the Shadow Over-

seas Development Minister, attacked the intervention by Cardinal Hume. Ms Short, who had a strict Catholic upbringing, said: "It's very sad that the Catholic Church retreats back on to this territory. It lost almost all the women of my generation because of its attitude to sex. They suggest that abortion is the primary moral question: it is not." She said she favoured a law regulating the availability of abortion but leaving it to the individual to make her choice.

The Tories too have difficulties on the issue. Dr Robert Spink, the MP for Castle Point, broke ranks yesterday when he admitted he could not support a Tory candidate at the general election who supported abortion.

He told GMTV's programme Sunday: "I wouldn't vote for them."

That's my choice. I wouldn't advise anyone else how they should vote." Pressed over what he would do if he faced by a pro-life Labour candidate and a pro-choice Tory, he replied: "I would find it very difficult to vote for the Conservative candidate. I would probably spoil my ballot paper."

The Pro-Life Alliance has received a pledge of £25,000 from Mohamed Al Fayed, the chairman of Harrods, which will cover the £500 deposits for 50 candidates. The remarks of Cardinal Hume are expected to give the organisation's fundraising activities a fillip.

The Pro-Life Alliance has indicated that it will challenge in the constituencies of up to eight Cabinet ministers, including the Chancellor, the Health Secretary and the Home Secretary.

Tories face poll setback on cash for questions

BY ANDREW PIERCE

JOHN MAJOR has been told that the potentially explosive report into the Commons "cash for questions" inquiry, which has been dogged by delays, could be published only weeks before the general election.

Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, who is conducting the investigation, had planned to write the report over Christmas. But so far he has not interviewed any leading witnesses.

The report into allegations that Ian Greer, the lobbyist, paid MPs for raising Commons questions was due at the end of next month. It is now facing a delay of up to eight weeks.

Ministers are becoming increasingly alarmed about the electoral implications. The controversy took a new twist yesterday when it emerged that David Willetts, who resigned as Paymaster General after being accused of misleading an all-party committee over his part in the affair, is to be offered a role at Conservative Central Office in the run-up to the election.

Mr Willetts, MP for Havant, has not made up his mind on whether to accept the unpaid duties. He has had several offers of highly paid work in the City of London. He is understood to be in talks with Kleinwort Benson, the merchant bank.

A senior Tory party official said last night: "We want him back. He is highly regarded

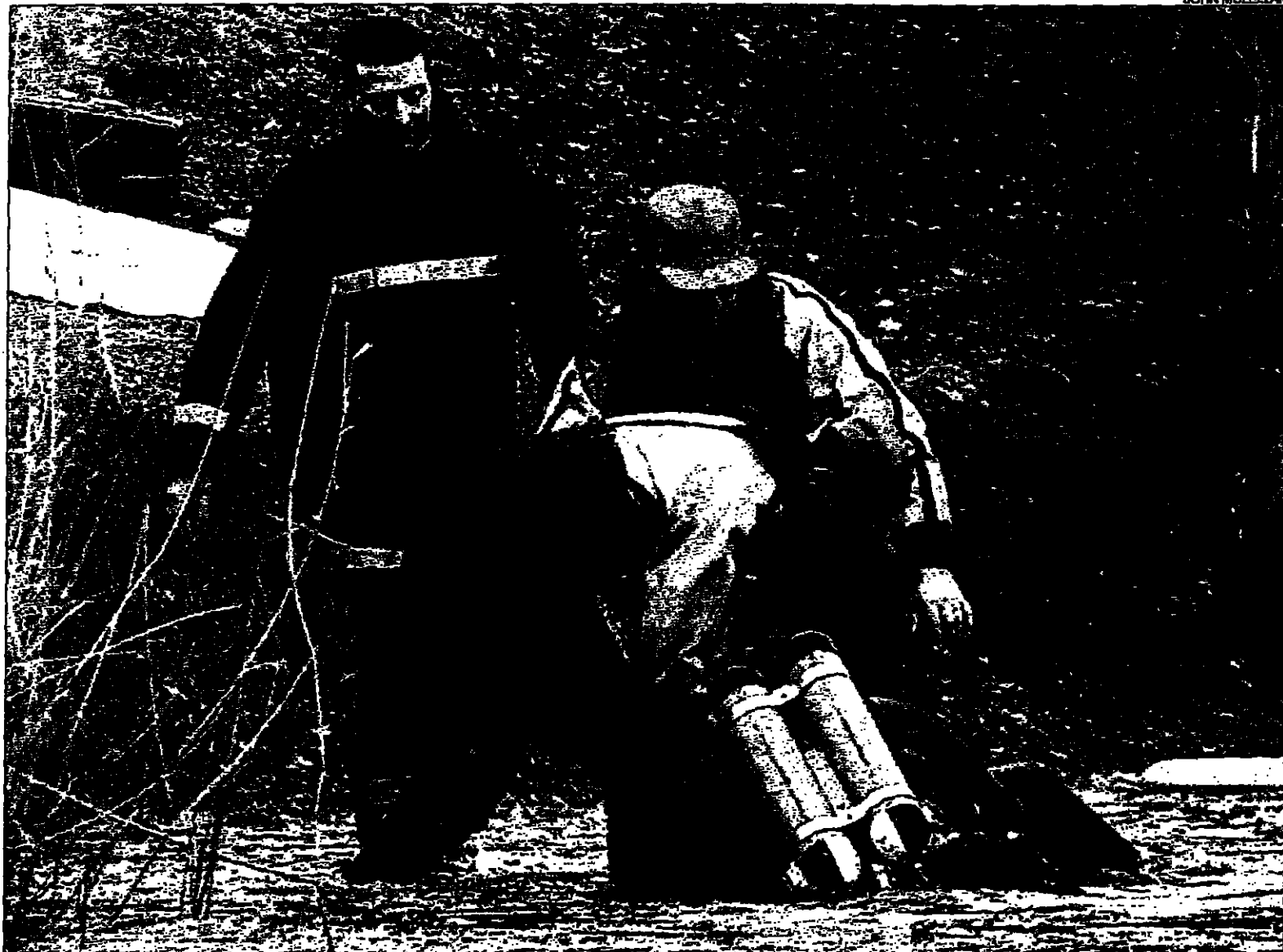
and much missed. He has a decisive contribution to make and earned great honour for resigning quickly."

One option would be to make Mr Willetts an unpaid vice-chairman, but the Prime Minister is wary of giving him such a formal role after he was so heavily criticised by the Commons Committee on Standards and Privileges, which has a Tory majority.

Many senior Tories believe that Mr Willetts will be lured by the prospect of a City salary but will combine those duties with part-time work for Central Office on election strategy. But the more pressing issue for the Tory high command is the delay in Sir Gordon's inquiry. Neil Hamilton, who resigned as a trade minister over the "cash for questions" allegations, and Mr Greer have lodged the relevant paperwork with Sir Gordon. Mr Hamilton and Mr Greer, who dropped a libel case against *The Guardian*, which printed the allegations, face cross-examination in private by a Treasury solicitor. No date has been fixed.

Both men are anxious for the inquiry, which was set up in October, to proceed without any further hold-up.

Sir Gordon has been constrained by resources and has complained that he has not even got adequate photocopying machinery. He is intent on interviewing some of the 25 MPs who received money for their general election fighting funds from Mr Greer.



Police divers recovering the body of William Willis from the frozen lake at Belhus Park, Aveley, near Grays in Essex yesterday

Couple die in lake attempting to rescue dog

Continued from page 1
died in West Yorkshire when she chased a dog on to a frozen lake.

Mr Cable said: "At this time of year you can almost write the script. It may sound hard-hearted but if your dog falls through ice you should leave it."

His team of 30 men also, used a thermal imaging camera to try to find the bodies. Axes and grappling hooks were used to smash the ice and probe for the missing couple. He estimated

that the ice was more than an inch thick on parts of the lake.

Sergeant Nigel Dermott, diving officer for Essex Police, said: "In those conditions visibility is zero and you work entirely by feel."

"The longest I have known anyone survive under water is 45 minutes. The woman had been under there for something like an hour and a half. Although there was a heart beat after she came out and you are always hopeful, you have to be realistic."

After treatment at Oldchurch Hospital, Romford, the condition of the two passers-by who attempted to rescue the victims was said to be much improved.

Neighbours of Mr and Mrs Willis, who lived within a ten-minute drive of the park, spoke of their shock. The dead man was semi-retired and his wife worked as a legal secretary in the City. They hoped to retire to Sussex in the near future, said Kenneth Gill, 72, a neighbour.

The couple's dog, aged between two

and three years, was taken to a nearby kennels where it was said to be in excellent condition.

There have been some remarkable cases of people surviving sub-zero temperatures for long periods, which have stopped their hearts. The cold has the effect of closing down most body systems which can be restarted by gentle warming. The longest recorded period in which a person's heart had stopped before being revived is three hours and 40 minutes.

Major launches campaign offensive

BY ANDREW PIERCE

A GENERAL election campaign set to be one of the longest in history was launched yesterday by John Major. He declared that Britain faced the stark choice of stability and prosperity under the Tories or a leap into the unknown with Labour.

In a clear indication that the election campaign will revolve around the economy, Mr Major set out pledges on tax, prices, mortgages and jobs, and claimed that they would win the Tories a fourth successive election.

But in an immediate resumption of hostilities John Prescott, the Deputy Labour leader, accused the Prime Minister of having launched a "Get Blair" campaign in his new year message.

Mr Major, in his letter to Conservative associations, said that the Tories had cut the basic rate of tax from 33 pence to 23 pence and were committed to cutting it to 20 pence. They were pledged to keep mortgages down, create more jobs, and to opposing a federal Europe. Mr Major, in an attempt to gain credit for the return of the "feel-good" factor, insisted it was not only the Government which had achieved the economic turnaround.

"I know how hard the British people have had to work to make life better in this country," he said. "As a result, we have made real gains, more spending money, more jobs and record investment. I know too how easy it would be to lose these hard-won gains."

Mr Prescott said: "This is the start of the £7 million Get Blair offensive... financed by sleazy foreign backers whose identities are being kept secret."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Death toll from E.coli outbreak reaches 16

A 91-year-old woman has died after being infected by the *E.coli* bacterium in Scotland, bringing the death toll to 16. Lanarkshire Health Board said the woman died in Monklands Hospital, Airdrie, yesterday. The toll is the largest number of deaths in a single outbreak of *E.coli* food-poisoning since 19 pensioners died in a Canadian nursing home in 1985. A health board spokesman said the woman, who has not been named, had been infected by *E.coli* 0157 through products purchased from John M. Barr and Son, a butcher's shop in Wishaw, Strathclyde. There are still 318 people showing symptoms of the infection.

Young Scots back independence

More than half of young Scots support independence, according to a poll in *Scotland on Sunday*. Fifty-two per cent of those between 15 and 25 said their best prospects lay in an independent Scotland, with a further 31 per cent backing a devolved parliament. If there were a referendum, 70 per cent would vote for a devolved parliament.

Bronze Age artefacts unearthed

The foundations of a Bronze Age settlement have been found during digging work for an hotel at Templepatrick, Co Antrim. Archaeologists have uncovered three sites but believe there were six homes in the area from an ancient farming community. Pottery, flint implements, arrowheads and a quern for grinding wheat have been unearthed.

'Lights out' jet scare investigated

British Airways is to investigate a pilot's claims that a 747's mid-air near-miss with another jumbo over the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan was caused by a company policy to save on light bulbs by having landing lights switched off above 10,000ft. BA said the recommendation was made because the lights could dazzle pilots in cloud.

Scotland Yard aids Cuba drug war

Two Scotland Yard officers are to travel to Cuba next month to help Fidel Castro's Government to combat cocaine smuggling from Venezuela and Colombia. It follows a successful initiative involving Customs and Excise staff and is expected to lead to Cuban police officers receiving training in Britain.

Surfing dog surfaces

The stolen surfing dog has been found. Max vanished on Christmas Eve after being tied to railings outside a shop in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. His owner, Peter Bonds, 47, was reunited with the mongrel that he taught to surf after a woman was seen walking Max in the town centre. She is assisting police inquiries.

Lawyers

Continued from page 1
string of court rulings and counter-rulings up to the Court of Appeal in individual cases over the past two years, but this is the first case involving a large number of firms.

Earlier this month, the High Court held that solicitors did have a duty to inform mortgage companies about bad-risk clients. In that case, the borrowers were £4,000 behind with their mortgage repayments when they took out a £91,000 loan with the National Home Loans Corporation. When they defaulted on their payments, the corporation was unable to recover its losses because of the fall in property prices. Awarding £80,000 damages against the solicitors, the Judge Graeme Hamilton QC said the loss was caused by the corporation "embarking upon a course of action upon which it would not have embarked had it been given the correct information. The duty in this case is to supply information."

In April, in another case brought by the Bristol & West against 15 firms of solicitors, Mr Justice Chadwick ruled that when a solicitor acted for both buyer and lender, he held the money in trust for the lender. The solicitor was in breach of trust, the judge said, if he parted with the money having failed to disclose relevant facts to the lender - but the lender would have to show that his loss would not otherwise have occurred.

Two years ago, the Law Society recommended that solicitors should no longer be able to act for borrowers and lenders. But the proposals were decisively rejected in a consultation of the profession and the society is now drafting new standard mortgage procedures to make solicitors' duties clearer.

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*Account opening subject to status. Full written details available on request.

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Ayckbourn falls out with resort that can't spend a penny

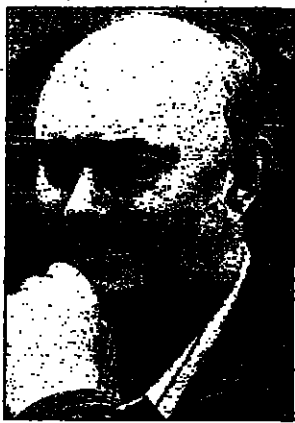
By ALAN HAMILTON

THAT devoted old couple, the playwright Alan Ayckbourn and the sedate old town of Scarborough, have fallen out after a relationship lasting 40 years.

The dispute, as ever, is over money. A theatre opened by Ayckbourn in the Yorkshire resort in April is in such dire financial straits that it has asked the local council for an extra £50,000 a year for five years to stay in business. The council, faced with £750,000 of spending cuts, says that if it funds the theatre it will have to close the town's 22 public lavatories.

Ayckbourn, who has had a love affair with Scarborough since getting his first job as an assistant stage manager there in the 1950s, and who has a house in the town, has turned against his adopted home after a barrage of criticism in the local press from council tax-payers who appear to prefer the convenience of lavatories to the culture of theatre.

The Stephen Joseph Theatre, named after Ayckbourn's theatrical mentor, opened in a former cinema in April at a cost of £5.2 million, of which £400,000 came from Ayckbourn, £1.5 million from a



Ayckbourn: given his first job in Scarborough

National Lottery grant and much of the rest from local donations. In the eight months since it opened, the theatre's operating losses have reached £825,000.

A waspish Ayckbourn said yesterday: "Scarborough cannot go around calling itself the Queen of the Watering Places when the North Sea is so polluted. If you happen to be a teetotaler in this town, God help you, because there is little else to do apart from get drunk and buy shoes. The reasons for coming here are getting less and less." All Ayckbourn

productions are traditionally staged first in Scarborough before transferring to the West End, allowing audiences to see shows at a fraction of London prices.

The theatre is named after the son of the publisher Michael Joseph and the actress Hermione Gingold, a director who introduced theatre in the round to Scarborough and who, before his death in 1967, was a major influence on Ayckbourn.

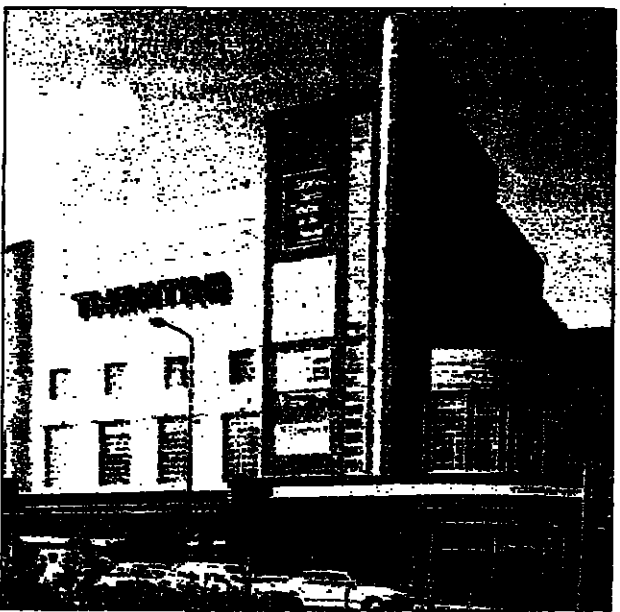
Irate taxpayers, informed of the choice facing the council on funding, have filled the letters columns of local newspapers. "Why is the theatre treated differently? How will people visiting our town feel when they find there are no public toilets for their use?" one wrote.

Councillors have not yet made a final decision on whether to bail out the theatre which, now that the Floral Hall has closed and the Scarborough Opera House has burnt down, is one of the town's few remaining tourist magnets.

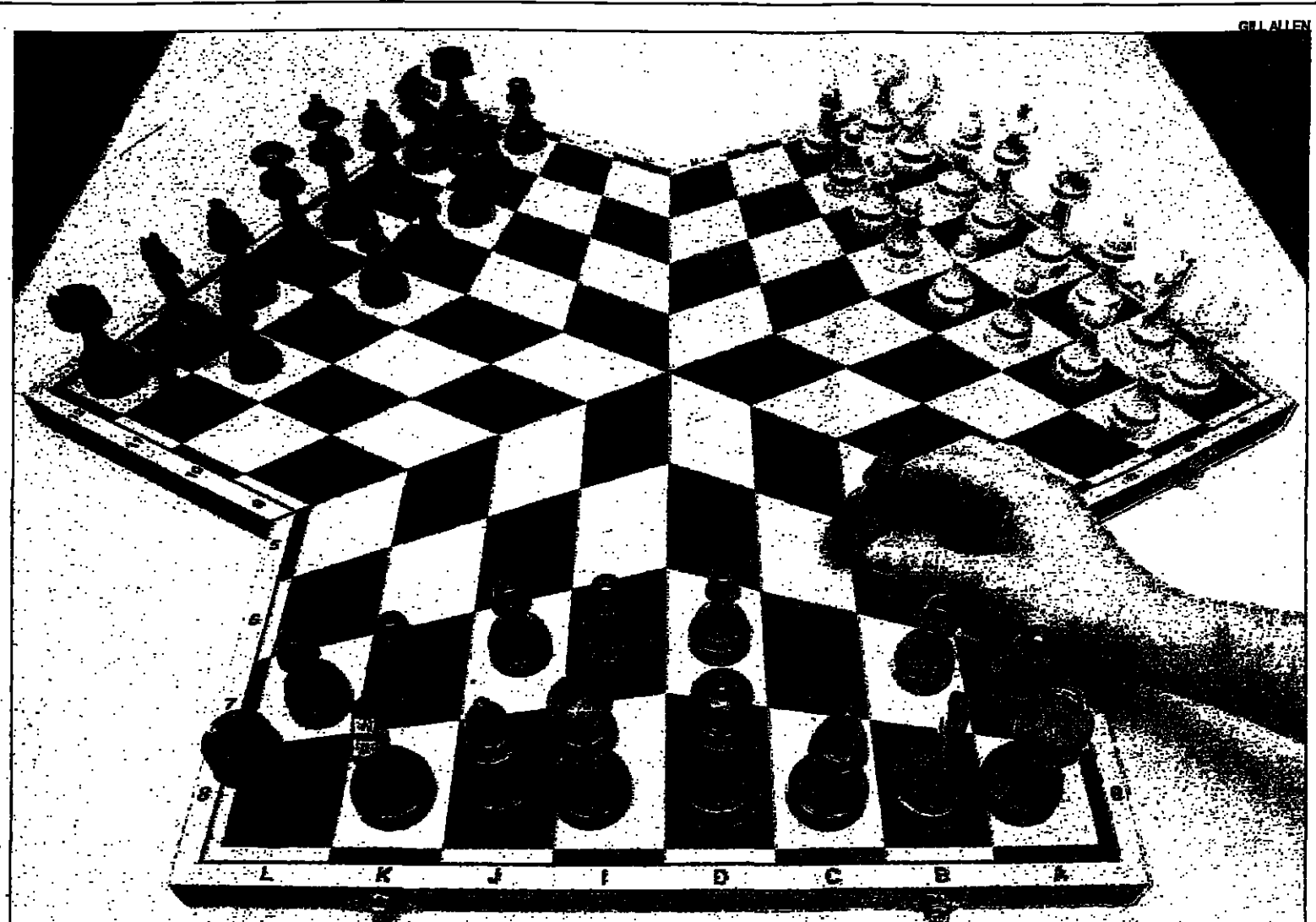
Dorothy Clegg, a member of the Labour-controlled council, said yesterday: "Grand gestures are all very well, but it is basic housekeeping which has to be observed in a time of economies. I want to see what the theatre is going to do; we did ask for accounts and a business plan two months ago in October, but we have not yet had them."

Scarborough, which claims to have pioneered the concept of a seaside resort in Victorian times, has had a difficult year. In June it offered to foot the £20,000 hotel bill for the Bulgarian football team competing in the Euro 96 tournament to stay near by at Ravenscar; the team declared themselves so bored that they moved out and paid £108 per head per night for rooms in faraway but more exciting Stockton-on-Tees.

Also, government auditors found that Scarborough council spent less per head of population on sports facilities than any other resort in North Yorkshire, despite being one of the county's busiest tourist areas.



The Stephen Joseph Theatre has run up losses of £825,000 in the eight months since it opened



A board of 96 squares is the battleground for three sets of the usual pieces. A player reaching the centre can attack either or both opponents

Snowbound stalemate was the opening move for invention of three-way chess

By ALAN HAMILTON

THREE'S a crowd when they are snowbound in a Scottish house for five weeks with only a chess set for amusement. There will always be someone left out as the two others pore over their pieces for hours on end.

Stranded with two friends at his home at Dunkeld, Perthshire, Khia Rasmussen, a former chess player, set about inventing a version of the game that could be played by three people simultaneously. Eleven years and £40,000 worth of investment later, three-way chess is about to be launched by a Brighton-based games company.

The board consists of three pentagons of 96 black and white squares, compared to the normal 64. Each player has the usual 16 pieces, which are black, white and red. Checkmate

is the object and a player reaching the centre of the board can choose to attack either or both opponents. The game, which has been tested by players from schoolchildren to grandmasters all over Europe, is claimed to increase excitement and to reduce the likelihood of a match ending in stalemate.

George Barrett, managing director of the company marketing the game, said yesterday that test marketing had shown that children grasped the concept of the game more quickly than adults. Top players found that it helped them to sharpen up for important matches. "They have to think more quickly and a lot of the textbook on pre-planned moves and defences has to be thrown out of the window."

Interest in the game is said to be strong in the United States, Switzerland and the Scandinavian coun-

tries, all of which are well acquainted with the risk of being cut off by blizzards for long periods with not much to do except to trap beavers, carve cuckoo clocks or consume dangerous amounts of vodka.

The makers hope eventually for a substantial market in Russia, a country with long experience of severe weather and chess. But even in those countries where winter diversions are at a premium, chess for three has never quite caught on.

Raymond Keene, chess correspondent of *The Times*, pointed out yesterday that the first game of three-way chess had been invented by Captain Philip Marinelli in 1722 and attracted among its enthusiasts Prince Eugene of Savoy, who fought with the Duke of Marlborough at the Battle of Blenheim. The Marinelli board had 136 squares. There have been many versions of three-person

chess since, including one using a hexagonal board invented by Zigmund Wellisch in 1912.

Mr Keene said: "Traditional chess is a very good game; you would need something pretty brilliant to replace it. Besides, there is something fundamental about a contest between two people."

Many variations of chess have been marketed, including a Christmas version launched in 1988, in which each player has three kings. Those frightened by the intellectual challenge of the latest version may take comfort from the fact that the 96-square, three-way board can also be used for a version of draughts, should you be holed up in a blizzard with two companions who think the Sicilian defence is something to do with bribing judges in Palermo.

Chess, page 30

Trauma silences raped 9-year-old

By DANIEL MCGROARY

A GIRL, aged nine who was raped with her mother on Boxing Day was last night still too traumatised to tell police about her ordeal.

The girl's mother, 53, who was the first to be assaulted by the intruder who broke into their bedroom, has told police that both she and her daughter were threatened with a knife. Detective Chief Inspector Heather Valentine, the detective leading the hunt, described the attack as "one of the most appalling assaults I have ever heard of".

The rapist, who held the weapon against the girl's throat while raping her, is believed to have taken the knife from the kitchen of the flat where the pair were spending Christmas with relatives in Northolt, west London.

The attacker threatened to kill them if they screamed and the distraught woman was forced to watch while he raped her daughter. After their thirty minute ordeal he demanded money and then calmly emptied the woman's purse on the bed and took some cash before escaping.

Detective Chief Inspector Valentine said: "This is an horrendous attack on two totally innocent people. For a mother and daughter to be both attacked and for both to witness the attacks on each other is appalling."

"There is no doubt they feared for their lives. This man said he would kill them. They are being cared for by specially trained women police officers. The little girl is absolutely traumatised and it is imperative we catch this man."

The relatives they were staying with had gone out when the intruder broke in through a patio door and attacked them. Police searched the area within minutes but could find no trace of him. The white man has blonde or light brown hair, bobbed to his ears and shaved at the neck, and is slim and clean-shaven, with chiselled features. He was wearing a distinctive blue sweatshirt with the letters USA in red on the chest. He had jeans and a black bomber jacket with orange or yellow lining as well as white, possibly new, trainers.

Church locks out feuding villagers

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

PARISHIONERS were locked out of church yesterday in the latest twist to a dispute over the ordination of women that has led to the cancellation of Christmas services.

Worshippers at 14th-century St Mary's, Colkirk, Norfolk, were shut out after the church council resigned after a vote of no confidence by villagers. In the summer the council forced the incoming vicar, the Rev David Burrell, 39, to resign when members discovered he supported the ordination of women. They had threatened to boycott services. The incident was believed to be the first of its kind in the Church of England.

Since then the village has been divided. Diana Beck, vicar of the church council and seven colleagues, resigned after the vote of no confidence in the council was passed at a public meeting.

Mrs Beck said: "This nonsense has been dragging on for months and it has been very unpleasant. We are all very unhappy and upset. Our churchwarden has been the subject of personal attacks in the parish magazine and our

regular prayer meeting was sabotaged by the calling of the public meeting on the same night. We felt we couldn't go on after the meeting decided they had lost confidence in us. We have been without a vicar for 20 months and after what has happened I fear a lot of people will not worship at Colkirk again."

There were complaints from villagers at the public meeting that they could not attend a non-Eucharist service at St Mary's. Janet Stangroom, from the neighbouring parish of Whissonsett, said: "Some people felt that the High Church tone was too rich for them. A lot of the people who wanted to go were not confirmed and could not take Communion. It was felt that the church council was not fairly representing the views of the majority of the parish."

The Rev Brian Cole, the Rural Dean who is looking after Colkirk until a new vicar is found, said: "We hope to resume services again at Colkirk in the new year but they will be under the jurisdiction of myself and the archdeacon."

Teenagers want to give up smoking

THE most popular new year resolution among teenagers is to give up smoking, according to a poll published yesterday. Others intend to stop drinking.

Parents disturbed that their children have taken up the habits in the first place may be cheered that there were also resolutions by the 16- to 18-year-olds to do better in examinations, to work harder and to save money.

While many of the 2,000 teenagers polled by NatWest bank appeared to spend money on tobacco and alcohol, the budgets of most of them went on traditional pursuits. CDs, tapes, clothes, magazines, sweets and the cinema all accounted for more of their spending.

Franco Zazzera of NatWest said: "I don't think it is all bad news and actually proves most teenagers are not as

BOYS
1 Stop smoking
2 Save money
3 Work harder
4 Do well in exams
5 Waste less money
6 Do better at school
7 Respect people more
8 Stop biting nails
9 Stop drinking
10 Eat less

wild as we think. The resolution to save money is very high up on the list for boys and top of the list for girls.

"Teenagers come in for a lot of flak over booze and drugs and the like, but that is really a manifestation of the minority. Most are quite down-to-earth. They save their pocket money or wages from part-time jobs. Heroes were familiar too:

GIRLS
1 Save money
2 Stop smoking
3 Stop biting nails
4 Work harder
5 Do better at school
6 Eat less
7 Waste less money
8 Be more tidy
9 Do well in exams
10 Get a job

for boys they were Arnold Schwarzenegger and Pamela Anderson on the screen and Eric Cantona and Alan Shearer on the pitch. For girls, they were Brad Pitt and Keam Reeves at the cinema and Linford Christie and Ryan Giggs in the sporting arena.

Both sexes gave Oasis as their favourite band; the second choice among boys was

the Spice Girls and for girls it was Peter Andre.

Applying political correctness to children's books has been undermined by the readers themselves. Surrey University's Southampton Institute, which questioned 9,000 children, found they did not feel it important to see images of themselves in literature.

Ronald Dahl and Enid Blyton were the top two authors for children aged seven to 16. Horror was the most popular genre for adolescents, but romance was a turn-off for girls of all ages. Children aged four to seven related most to their choice of reading to television characters.

More than eight out of ten boys and girls believed that reading helped them to understand more about their changing bodies.

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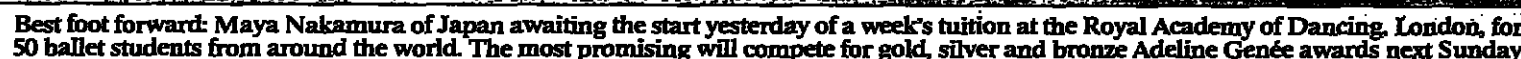
Mogul
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Six men arrested by the RUC in a subsequent security operation were still being questioned by detectives yesterday.

Nine days ago Eddie Cope-

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

Baroness Blatch, a junior Home Office minister, said the research suggested a growing confidence in tagging among judges and magistrates. But Harry Fletcher, of the National Association of Probation Officers, said no long-term conclusion about the effectiveness of tagging could be drawn from a study of only 83 people.



BY NIGEL HAWKE
SCIENCE EDITOR

Mr Howard, 72, a retired engineering director who lives in Hull, endured high-pitched screaming sounds, loud ticking noises, persistent humming and even a bird singing shrilly. He now considers himself cured after learning to ignore the constant, nagging

[illegible]

Dr Thomas Stuttaford

them are not over-strained, may prevent a recurrence of the polyps and nodules. In some cases, as with Mrs Clowry, a change of job is recommended.

Laryngeal diseases are more likely to affect those whose cords have been irritated by fumes caused by tobacco, alcohol or a polluted atmosphere. They cause hoarseness and loss of voice, which is worse after prolonged speech.

It has always been acknowledged that actors, sergeant-majors, clergymen and others who are always talking or shouting as part of their occupations are likely to develop nodules on their vocal cords, but Mrs Clowry's case will lead to claims from people in many other jobs.

Just before Christmas, one

Polyps and nodules have to be distinguished from malignant disease of the vocal cord and an expert opinion is required, as they must be removed and examined under a microscope. Voice lessons, so that the vocal cords and the small muscles which work

Hoarseness which persists for more than a month, despite adequate treatment of any infection, needs investigation to exclude malignant disease. Malignant tumours of the vocal cord are more common in men than women and affect those who smoke and drink to excess, more often than the abstemious.

Blind angry at plan to change Braille

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

A £12 MILLION rail scheme is being planned to relieve tourist pressure on one of Britain's most picturesque beauty spots.

vide a vital link for the area and take cars and heavy lorries off the road." Martin Doughty, the council leader, said, "By working in co-operation with other local authorities and rail operating companies, we hope to attract funding and make progress with this exciting scheme."

MANY of Britain's blind people are angry over a plan to change the Braille read-by-touch system which has been virtually unaltered since its invention in 1820.

27 per cent objected to any change and 55 per cent endorsed it.

A study has found that reopening the Buxton to Matlock rail service in the Derbyshire Peak District would attract more than 200,000 passengers a year. But the high cost of restoring the 20-mile line has forced Derbyshire County Council to seek financial help, including a request for a National Lottery grant. Four of the 40 bridges and viaducts on the route will have to be rebuilt. This project would pro-

The project would include running weekend heritage services operated by steam or diesel locomotives between Matlock and Burton. The line could also carry through-passenger traffic and freight.

The Braille Authority of the United Kingdom wants to bring the system into line with that of other English-speaking countries by introducing capitalised letters to a code which has previously used only lower-case characters.

The move, which has alarmed a significant number of blind people among Britain's estimated 12,000 Braille readers, comes after a consultative questionnaire earlier this year analysed at Birmingham University. Of 1,200 Braille readers who replied,

Braille, devised by Louis Braille (1809-52), a French educationalist, is based upon a cell, or matrix, system of six raised dots arranged to represent each character in the alphabet and several shorthand words.

Opponents of the change say that an extra cell will be required before each letter to denote a capital. Supporters say that it will prevent ambiguity, such as in 'polish/Polish', and make capitalised abbreviations more recognisable.

The Royal National Institute for the Blind declined to comment on the controversy.

Royal Collection to exhibit manuscript made for Emperor who built the Taj Mahal

Mogul masterpiece on show for first time in 200 years

BY DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A 17TH-CENTURY Mogul manuscript presented to George III in 1797 is to be exhibited in public for the first time.

The Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace will display the Padshahnama manuscript — described as "an historical testament to one of the greatest eras of cultural achievement in the history of India" — in March. It will form one of four exhibitions planned for next year, reflecting a decision approved by the Queen that the Royal Collection should be more active.

Other exhibitions for next year include 18th-century views of Windsor in watercolours by Thomas and Paul Sandby (the Royal Collection has the world's largest collection of their watercolours and drawings); portrait miniatures by Holbein and Hilliard; and photographs of Queen Victoria and her relatives. Exhibitions for 1998 include "Michelangelo and his Influence". Hugh Roberts, director



George III: he received the manuscript in 1797

of the Royal Collection, said that, apart from 30,000 drawings which are too delicate to be on permanent view, most holdings were on display. He rejected suggestions that treasures were often hidden from the public. "It is infuriating to read that the collection is not visible. It is

highly visible." The collection, seen by more than five million people a year, is spread primarily between Hampton Court, the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Buckingham Palace and Windsor.

George III received the Padshahnama — meaning The Chronicle of the King of the World — through Lord Teignmouth, Governor-General of India, from the Nawab of Lucknow, Theresa-Mary Morton, of the Royal Collection, said: "It has remained one of the great treasures of the Royal Collection."

Until recently, when it required some minor conservation, it had been impossible to exhibit it because its 239 folios were bound together. Following displays in London and in India, for the fiftieth anniversary of independence, it will be rebound. Ms Morton said that this was probably the only time in its history that it could be shown.

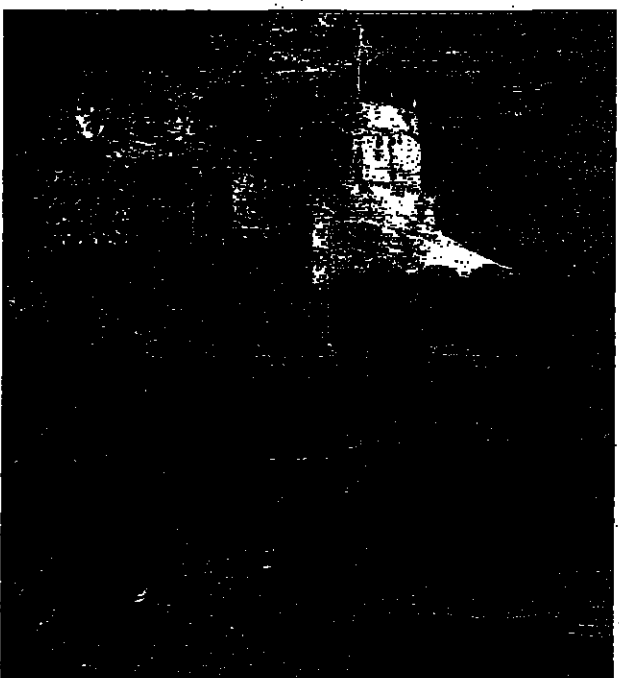
The Padshahnama, which still retains the original silk cloth in which it was presented to George III, is as valuable to historians as to art scholars. Its text — with 44 illustrations including a court scene, a procession and a hunt — traces the first ten years of the reign of Shah Jahan, who built the Taj Mahal for his favourite wife and who was the wealthiest and most powerful of the Mogul Emperors from the 16th to 18th centuries.

Ms Morton said that Shah Jahan insisted that major events associated with his reign be recorded and, in 1639, he commissioned Abdur-Hamid Lahawri to create a lavish historical record. Only one copy is known to have been made during his lifetime and the illustrations came from the greatest artists of the imperial workshop.

Shah Jahan's reign witnessed heights of technical perfection that were never surpassed, said Ms Morton, who described the Padshahnama's realism and attention to detail as breathtaking.



A page from the Padshahnama depicting a delivery of presents for the wedding of Prince Dara Shikoh



One of the 18th-century watercolours of Windsor Castle by Paul Sandby, due to be exhibited in 1997

Prince puts his faith in Battersea plan for spiritual power station

BY ALAN HAMILTON

THE Prince of Wales is supporting a plan to build a 10,000-seat ecumenical church to celebrate the millennium. During the past year he has complained that schemes to celebrate the new century were insufficiently spiritual.

The project, using an empty site next to Battersea power station in central London, is still at the drawing-board stage and will need £50 million from the National Lottery Millennium Fund. Promoters of the scheme, including the merchant bankers Warburg, have proposed a church, religious conference centre and hotel open to Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Nonconformists and other denominations. The Prince has agreed that his Projects Office, an offshoot of his Institute of Architecture, should advise on design.

The ecumenical message was reinforced yesterday by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who has recently returned from a meeting with the Pope in Rome. Dr George Carey told GMTV: "Unity is essential for the mission of the Church and I long for unity."

not only with Rome but with all Christian denominations. We know that unreconciled Christianity gets in the way of the mission of the Church, and we've got to do it. Exciting things have happened in our day — Christian groups are coming together more closely than they have ever done."

Dr Carey urged the Church to pay more attention to youth culture. "Sometimes older people are secretly afraid of young people, and they think young people are very surprised by that."

The project to create a

religious community centre by the Thames next to a half-demolished power station, with a professed emphasis on the young, is no more or less ambitious a scheme than many others proposed for the millennium, which have the common feature of an extremely short time in which they can be built.

But the Prince is keen to redress his balance of interests in favour of the Christian Church after his well-publicised and long-standing stance in favour of a greater understanding of Islam. Documents leaked from St James's Palace last week indicate that he will pay more attention to public engagements to the Church of England, of which he is a practising member and of which one day he will be titular head in Britain.

His advisers, anxious to promote a positive image of the heir to the throne now that his divorce is out of the way, are aware that the Prince's desire for better relations with Islam, although widely praised, are in danger of upsetting traditionalist British opinion.

A Palace source said yesterday: "The Prince is, and always has been, a practising Anglican, although he has always been in favour of a greater understanding of other religions represented in Britain. But as he moves towards his eventual role as monarch, it is sensible that he be seen to be taking a closer interest in the traditional religion of the country."



The former Battersea power station: a 10,000-seat ecumenical church is planned for the site next door

Royal trust given £2.5m in lottery cash to help disadvantaged youth

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN

THE Prince of Wales's charity for young people, The Prince's Trust, is to receive more than £2.5 million of National Lottery money to distribute to about 2,500 disadvantaged youngsters.

The grant, to be announced today by Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, is part of £10 million for the Millennium Commission's Awards Scheme, which is designed to channel lottery cash to individuals rather than building projects, organisations, groups or charities. The money will be distributed on behalf of the commission by eight "award partners", existing charities with a proven track record of making grants to individuals.

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the mental health charity MIND are expected to be named today as partners, along with others and the Prince's Trust. News of the grant is

expected to provide a much-needed public relations victory for the Millennium Commission.

Both it and the Government are hoping that the Millennium Awards, which are meant to help individuals to fulfil their personal aspirations, will bring a popular touch back to the process of distributing lottery money and will restore the credibility of the commission as a distributor of largesse.

There is a widespread feeling in Westminster that the lottery has been one of the biggest missed PR opportunities of the current administration, with most people thinking the money is spent on major building projects. "It is often the flagship capital projects that get the headlines but it is actually individuals that make a difference to the community," a commission source said.

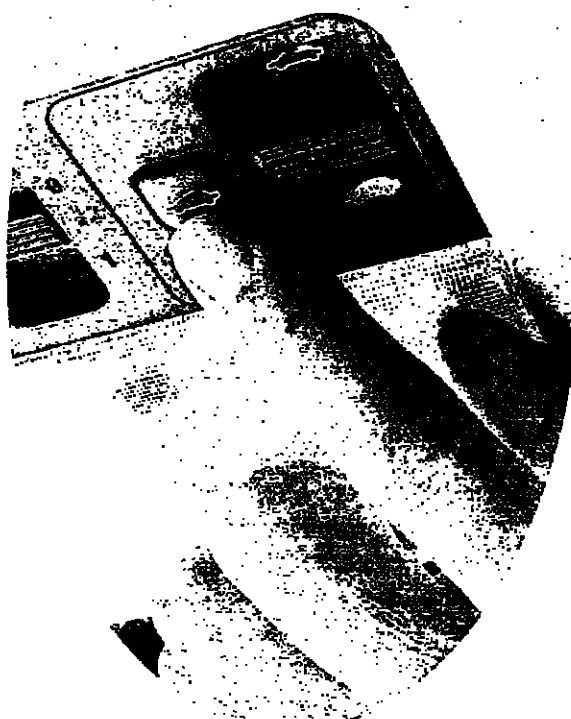
Projects undertaken by individuals using lottery money must have a millennium theme, such as preserving the

environment for future generations, and must also benefit the community. The Prince's Trust is expected to aim its 2,500 awards at disadvantaged young people who might not normally be identified as worthy recipients of public funds. The grants will help individuals to learn practical skills such as carpentry.

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, which usually helps to fund projects such as path-clearing over public land, will make 1,000 grants to help individuals to develop leadership skills. MIND will make 500 awards to individuals or small groups involved in working to take away the stigma surrounding mental illness.

The commission has set aside £20 million a year over five years to give as Millennium Awards to individuals. In October it announced £8.6 million in grants to 3,000 people, distributed through six charities. A new round of funding will open next month.

AND ANOTHER



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HONDA

Suicide man is feared to have burnt wife's body

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

A BUSINESSMAN who committed suicide after burning down his house may have incinerated his wife's body.

Police searching the farm near Tiverton, Devon, which Derek Levon, 61, had bought with his terminally-ill wife Pauline found an area of scorched earth 200 yards from the barn where the computer firm director shot himself on Friday in front of officers who had tried to persuade him to hand over the shotgun. The couple's other house, 100 miles away in the village of Silverton, was destroyed by fire nine hours before Mr Levon shot himself.

The police were yesterday awaiting the results of an analysis of the contents of a tin found in the boot of Mr Levon's car which they fear are his wife's ashes. Mrs Levon has not been seen for more than a week.

Forensic tests are to be carried out on the burnt piece of grazing land to see if Mrs Levon, who had cancer, was cremated there.

The couple's two daughters Alison and Elaine, who are



The Levons' house in Silverton, Devon, which was destroyed by fire before Mr Levon killed himself

both married and live in Cyprus, have now been traced. One of them is returning to Devon to try to help solve the mystery. Police said that Mr Levon had posted them a note which stated that he and his wife intended to commit suicide.

However, Detective Superintendent John Smith, who is leading the inquiry, said: "The suicide note was only signed

by Mr Levon although it did refer to an intention for them both to take their own lives. It is a one-page note and the only hint it gives as to motive are the words 'various reasons'. There is no mention of his wife's cancer.

"We are hoping to take full statements from the officers who spoke to Mr Levon before he killed himself. He indicated his wife may be in the car. We

are searching the farm at the moment to find out if a body was cremated there and we have found a burnt area in a field out there which we are looking at forensically."

When she was last seen, on December 21, Mrs Levon, who was known as Polly, told friends and shopkeepers that she and her husband were hoping to book a flight so that they could spend Christmas with their family in Cyprus.

"We don't think they were able to get to Cyprus and the last sighting we have of Mr Levon was at 8.30pm on Boxing Day by a neighbour who visited him, who did not see Mrs Levon."

Mr Smith added that he was baffled by Mr Levon's decision to burn the house down. "Our priority now is to establish the identity of the human remains found in the car. We are still hoping to locate Mrs Levon but I have my doubts."

"We have no indication that this tragedy was expected by anyone. The note looks quite well-planned and methodical. He was determined he was going to commit suicide and told us where he could be found."



Derek Levon, who shot himself dead, with his wife Pauline, who was terminally ill with cancer

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Chimps safe in a refuge away from poachers, labs and loggers

By DANIEL MCGRORY

THE footfall on the grass was enough to send the chimpanzee screeching for the nearest cover. The visitor to the chimpanzee sanctuary intended no harm, but the frightened creature clung trembling to a tree trunk remembering that its last encounter with a stranger was a poacher who shot and skinned its mother.

The infant chimpanzee is safe now at the Jane Goodall Institute, corralled along with 53 other orphans at the Tchimpounga Sanctuary, sponsored by the charity Tusk Force, in the Congo, out of range of the rifles but still terrified of human contact. At the institute, named after a British chimp expert, the chimpanzees are schooled into how to behave in the wild, while teams of anti-poaching rangers patrol to deter the hunters who are never far away.

It is estimated that fewer than 200,000 chimps now survive in the wild and international regulations supposed to protect them are so poorly policed as to be meaningless. They have little chance to replenish their number because they are slow breeders and usually do not bring more than two offspring to full maturity.

The destruction of Africa's forests by the logging trade has resulted not only in the wanton and large-scale destruction of the habitat, but the roads carved through these areas by the timber companies assist the poachers who hunt primates for bush meat and export. There is abundant evidence that logging firms connive in the bush meat trade, and many are owned or financed by European companies. Their vehicles are used to ferry poachers into the forests and then carry the meat because most of the workers rely on it as their only source of nutrition.

A recent investigation found bush meat openly and widely on sale throughout Central Africa. In one district of Cameroon an estimated 800 gorillas are killed annually, while the ethnic conflicts in Burundi and Rwanda have

led to the creatures being hunted as food. This year, in an effort to foster what he called a spirit of enterprise, the President of the Congo issued a public statement encouraging children to take up hunting during their school holidays.

There is also a particular type of ammunition now produced, the chevronette, which is a cartridge specifically developed for hunting animals such as the gorilla. It contains nine lead balls which afford the hunter the maximum chance of felling a creature in one go.

Poachers who prey on the chimpanzees slaughter the mothers for meat and capture the young for pets or the burgeoning demand from laboratories. The international outcry against monkeys being used for laboratory experiments or vivisection has diminished in recent years and there is abundant evidence that the numbers of creatures captured for such uses is again increasing.

This week the Russians launched two macaque monkeys into space in a joint operation with the French to study the effects of weightlessness, evoking memories of the early days of space exploration which relied entirely on animal research.



Fewer than 200,000 chimps survive in wild

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Killer targets surviving Beatles

FROM JAMES BONE
IN NEW YORK

THE man who killed John Lennon was quoted yesterday as threatening the lives of the three remaining Beatles, and has reportedly tattooed his warning on his arm.

Mark David Chapman, who is serving 20 years to life for shooting Lennon in New York in 1980, told a fellow inmate: "The Fab Four is keeping me down. I'm going to kill 'em all."

The *Star* supermarket tabloid said that Chapman, eligible for parole in four years, had a tattoo on his right biceps to remind him of his plans. It has the words "John Lennon" and "Lonely", two red hearts, a black gun and the initials "FVRN" — "Fab Four You R Next".

The unidentified inmate, who reportedly spent 100 days with Chapman in the maximum-security wing of Attica prison, told the magazine that the murderer is again haunted by the "voices" he claimed drove him to shoot Lennon in New York.

"I popped a cap on him to put him out of his misery and free me," Chapman was quoted as saying. "Now my life's over and they're imprisoning me again, the three remaining Beatles. When I get out, I'm going to free myself again."

He has decorated his cell with Beatles photographs and a picture of Lennon in the mortuary. He is apparently enraged that Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr are making money by using old Lennon recordings to make new recordings.

The inmate said when Chapman talks of revenge "you'd think he was ordering a chocolate milkshake".



Chapman: tattoo on his arm

Clinton acts to prevent medical use for 'pot'

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

DEFYING the voters' will, President Clinton has approved a plan to threaten doctors with the loss of their licenses, and even prosecution, if they prescribe marijuana for seriously ill patients in Arizona and California.

Letters will be sent to every doctor in the two states warning that marijuana remains an illegal narcotic under federal laws and threatening to revoke their powers to dispense drugs if they recommend or prescribe it.

In addition, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will, if necessary, use surveillance and informers to track down "Dr Feelgood" physicians who make a practice of recommending the drug to many patients. In those cases, prosecution would be a strong option, officials said.

Ballot propositions approving the medical use of marijuana were passed by comfortable margins in both states in last month's election — with the support of doctors, nurses, consumer groups and liberal politicians. Many chronically ill patients testified to the media that their suffering had been eased by smoking "pot".

California's measure allowing marijuana under the direction of a doctor for the treatment of AIDS, cancer, arthritis, chronic pain and other illnesses was passed by 56 per cent to 44 per cent.

Voters in Arizona, normally considered conservative, supported their state's initiative, allowing doctors to prescribe marijuana as an anti-nausea agent for cancer patients seriously ill by 65 per cent to 35 per cent. That state also included other drugs such as heroin and LSD for pain relief.

Ballot initiatives are powerful weapons in the hands of voters and have the force of law unless overturned by the courts. In the late 1970s, California's historic Proposition 13

forced the state to reduce property taxes and launched a tax-cutting movement across America.

Mr Clinton, who famously tried marijuana once but "did not inhale", is reacting partly out of fear that prescriptions for marijuana will appear to give legal sanction to the drug.

The President's drug chief, Barry McCaffrey, a former army general, said the crackdown was intended to maintain effective drug enforcement under federal laws, to ensure that approved drugs are safe and effective, to maintain drug-free workplaces and to protect children from increased marijuana availability. That last hope is already belated: use of marijuana is once more soaring among America's teenagers.

Mr McCaffrey, who insists that marijuana has no accepted medical use, leads a broad-based government task force dedicated to fighting the California and Arizona initiatives.

In Washington, the Justice and Health Departments will try to persuade Congress to limit the ability of states to pass propositions dealing with medicine.

With the threat to take away doctors' licences, the California Medical Association is advising its 35,000 members not to recommend or prescribe marijuana for anyone, at least for the time being.

The disagreement between voters' wishes and the Government's dictates may require the US Supreme Court to issue a definitive ruling.

Bill Zimmerman, who managed the successful proposition campaign, said his supporters are planning a federal lawsuit to stop the DEA punishing doctors who simply recommend marijuana to patients. For a doctor not to be able to express his opinion that marijuana might help would violate the Constitution's guarantee of free speech, Mr Zimmerman said.



Women in Guatemala City await the return from exile of guerrilla leaders for the signing of yesterday's peace accord

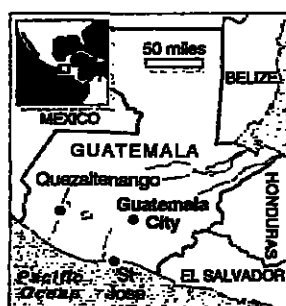
Hardcore gunmen threaten Guatemalan peace accord

BY TUNKU VARADARAJAN

THE longest-running civil war in the Western hemisphere came to a formal halt yesterday when Guatemala's left-wing guerrilla leaders signed an accord for a "firm and lasting peace" with President Arzú.

The peace pact ends a 36-year conflict, arguably the bloodiest in modern Latin America, in which more than 150,000 Guatemalans are estimated to have been killed, with some 50,000 "disappeared" and nearly a million people driven into exile.

The war, whose existence was never formally acknowledged by successive army-backed regimes, began in November 1960 when two left-wing army officers, Turcio Lima and Marco Antonio Yon Sosa, formed the Revolutionary Movement of the 13th of November, the nucleus of a guerrilla movement. That movement eventually came together in 1982 under a loose alliance called the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity, three of whose leaders



attended yesterday's ceremony in Guatemala City.

The blackest chapters of the civil war occurred between 1978 and 1982, when the regimes of Generals Romeo Lucas García and Efraín Ríos Montt adopted a "scorched earth" policy against large swaths of rural Guatemala inhabited by the indigenous Quiché, K'ek'chi, K'ik'chi and Mam people, completely erasing from the map at least 450 villages. It was not until the agreement of Esquipulas in 1986, by which the leaders of all Central American countries committed themselves to the peaceful resolution of internal political disputes, that

the intensity of the civil war in Guatemala began to wane.

Yesterday's agreement has been greeted by Guatemalans with a mixture of jubilation and scepticism. Rigoberta Menchú, the indigenous civil rights campaigner who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, has said that there are right-wing groups still active which "would aim to disrupt" any peace with the country's indigenous majority.

Reports have also reached the capital of groups of guerrilla *rearmados* — hardcore dissidents who are still determined to bring about a revolution — regrouping in the region of Quetzaltenango.

The main points of the accord, concluded in Mexico City, Oslo, Stockholm and Madrid, stipulate the demobilisation of the guerrillas and their return to civilian life; a reduction of the Guatemalan Army from 45,000 to 30,000 men and the dismantling of government-backed paramilitary groups; a reform of the judicial system; increased spending on rural infrastructure; and the creation of a fund

to finance the purchase of land for small farmers and co-operatives.

The Guatemalan parliament recently passed a law of national reconciliation, which would enable the rebel alliance to register itself as a lawful political party. Controversially, however, the law also provides an amnesty in the name of "reconciliation" to all those who violated human rights during the war, whether government soldiers or insurgents. "Crimes against humanity", not defined in the text of the law, will remain subject to punishment.

About 95 per cent of the rural population is landless, while 2 per cent owns 65 per cent of the productive land. Since grinding rural poverty drove many Guatemalans into the arms of the guerrillas, a failure to address seriously the causes of their impoverishment could lead to a recrudescence of conflict.

Señor Arzú, the architect of the peace process, has estimated that Guatemala needs at least \$2.3 billion (£1.43 billion) to put the accord into effect.

Gingrich re-election support dwindles

BY IAN BRODIE

SUPPORT for the re-election of Newt Gingrich as Speaker was faltering yesterday after a report that two lawyers had advised him against mixing funds for charitable activities with his political projects.

Mr Gingrich, who remained out of sight, was still confident of retaining the Speaker's chair when the US House of Representatives votes on Tuesday of next week. But his backing among Republicans was no longer as solid as party leaders claimed a week ago. Eight members were said to have shifted from a firm commitment to Mr Gingrich to being undecided and were pressing for him to give a full account of his ethical lapses at a public hearing of the ethics committee.

Republicans control the House by 227 seats to 208, and Democrats could only deny Mr Gingrich re-election if 20 Republicans simply voted "present", meaning they refused to say yes or no.

Before Christmas a subcommittee said that Mr Gingrich had brought discredit on the House by failing to seek legal advice before using tax-exempt funds for his televised college course — a partisan project — and by providing the committee with "inaccurate, incomplete and unreliable information" about the funding. Mr Gingrich said he was wrong not to have sought legal advice over whether using the funds complied with tax laws. But the *Atlanta Constitution* unearthed documents showing that two lawyers did caution him against using tax-exempt funds for the project.

Democrats trying to capitalise on the Republicans' embarrassment were demanding that Mr Gingrich should be called to give a public account of why he apparently ignored the lawyers' advice and why he said he had not sought it.

The ethics committee — five Republicans and five Democrats — could propose a reprimand for Mr Gingrich by the House, in which case he could still run for re-election as Speaker. A sterner censure would bar him from running.

Leading article, page 19

New York curbs its murder rate

New York: Police here are patrolling trouble-spots in a year's end effort to keep the city's annual murder rate under 1,000 for the first time since 1968 (James Bone writes). Extra officers have been assigned to nightclubs and social workers have increased supervision of homes prone to domestic violence.

The 1996 death toll rose to 972 yesterday with the discovery of two bodies stuffed in plastic bags in the South Bronx, but the count was less than half the record of 2,245 murders set in 1990. In 1995, the total was 1,180. The dramatic drop in New York's murder rate is a political coup for Rudolph Giuliani, a former

prosecutor who is the city's first Republican Mayor in a generation.

The fall has been particularly pronounced for random killings, like those committed during muggings or traffic disputes. Only one in five murder victims was killed by a stranger, compared with twice that number in 1993.

Peru rebels give up demand for release of jailed comrades

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN LIMA

LEFT-WING Peruvian rebels freed another 20 hostages from the Japanese Ambassador's residence in Lima at the weekend as they raised hopes that they are softening their demands. Eighty-three people remain captive.

In a statement after releasing the hostages, the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement rebels dropped their central demand for the release of more than 450 of their imprisoned comrades. Their communiqué, read out by one of the released hostages, only said that they wanted to talk about "improved prison conditions" for their fellows.

The hostages' release, at 5.20pm on Saturday, came two hours after the Government's negotiator went into the besieged building for the first time to speak to the leader of the guerrillas, Domingo Palerm, the Education Minister, managed a lengthy conversation with Nestor Cerpa Cartofini, alias "Comandante Evaristo", and convinced him to release more hostages without giving in to any demands.

"We have succeeded in liberating 20 hostages and those who are still inside are in good health," said Señor Palerm as he emerged. "This has shown that we are advancing towards a solution."

The first hostages to be freed on Saturday were the Ambassador of the Dominican Republic, the Malaysian Ambassador, and the Peruvian director of an exporters' association. They walked free clutching plastic bags filled with some belongings and

keen to run into the arms of their families who waited outside.

The rebels' statement also insisted that they should not be compared with Peru's other, but traditionally more ruthless insurgent movement, the Shining Path, or Sendero Luminoso.

"We insist we are not blood-thirsty like the Shining Path and have never killed innocent civilians at whim. We have targeted our activity against the authorities and are also prepared to come to a peaceful agreement," the communiqué said.

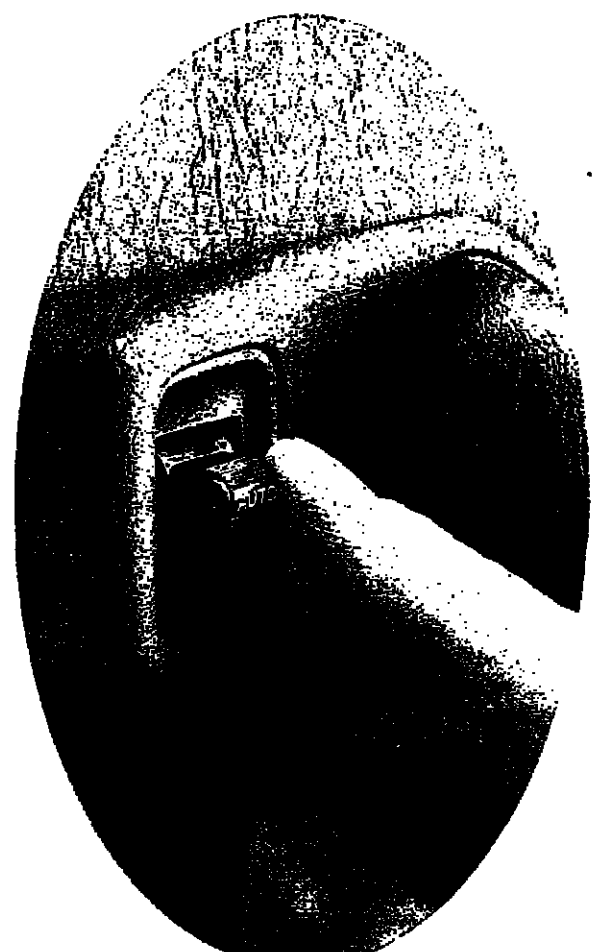
A second batch of 17 freed hostages included seven Peruvian Foreign Ministry officials and ten Japanese executives from such companies as Mitsubishi, Toyota and Mitsu, who are among the biggest foreign investors in Peru.

They came out saying that they had not been mistreated and that they were well. But the Japanese hostages still inside the Ambassador's home sent a letter to the Peruvian Government, saying that they would not be able to keep up morale for much longer, and calling for more intensive efforts to secure their release.

"We are not sure how long we will be able to keep this up. Morale is flagging," said the letter signed by the 20 Japanese citizens, mostly company executives.

One mediator, Michael Minnig of the Red Cross, said yesterday that the latest releases were a "clear sign that negotiations are paying off".

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Dutch take lessons of Srebrenica nightmare into term as EU leader

The Irish retire the Dutch take the stage. The European Union's rotating presidency changes hands this week and you will read and hear a great deal of guff about how Dutch ministers are going to get tough with Britain over changes to the Maastricht treaty.

Brave but futile attempts will be made to paint Hans van Mierlo, the Foreign Minister, and Michel Pajin, the European Affairs Minister, as a menacing federalist enforcement squad planning to hold John Major's (or Tony Blair's) feet to the fire this summer. This is one new year prediction you can safely



**THIS WEEK
IN EUROPE**

ignore. Messrs Van Mierlo and Pajin are not pushovers and must talk about urgent deadlines to concentrate minds, but the Dutch are in no mood to take risks. Wherever these two gentlemen

stand at any given moment, that spot will be safe centre ground.

If EU leaders agree a Treaty of Amsterdam next June, it will not be thanks to any bullying by the Dutch. They took big political risks in Europe several times this decade and had their fingers burnt.

Interests are often defined by past trauma. Germany's twin 20th-century nightmares were hyper-inflation and Hitler. German politicians today pay a high price to preserve a hard mark and search for collective solutions to any and every international problem. Dutch realism in the EU

is likewise rooted in recent and painful experience.

Their economy is the least of their worries — top of the EU class, with the guilder so strong and stable that Dutch bankers talk condescendingly about the performance of the mark. Job creation is high, social spending shrinking and economic growth healthy.

But in the political balance of power, things have not gone so well. When the Maastricht treaty was being put together five years ago, the Dutch Government of the day, intoxicated by the thought of a quantum

leap towards a federal Europe and badly distracted by the disintegration of Yugoslavia, offered an ambitious version of the treaty. The document was humiliated at a meeting still known in The Hague as "Black Monday". The Dutch had broken the first rule of EU conduct for small states: before sticking your neck out, first check that France and Germany will not chop your head off. Neither Paris nor Bonn supported them at the moment of truth.

Other EU setbacks followed. Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, refused to even consider allowing the

impeccably qualified former Prime Minister, Ruud Lubbers, to become President of the European Commission. Dutch dairy farmers, owners of some of the most lavishly subsidised cows in the world, reached the end of their free ride. The Netherlands became a contributor to the EU budget.

Perhaps the most disillusioning episode of all was the massacre by Bosnian Serbs last year of thousands of men in the captured town of Srebrenica, virtually before the eyes of helpless Dutch soldiers. Moral passion has long been a powerful element in Dutch foreign policy: the

fervour which once went into anti-nuclear marches is now channelled into human rights. The United Nations plan to designate "safe areas" in Bosnia-Herzegovina found favour with Dutch politicians who were among the first to respond to the appeal for troops.

The grim story of what happened to the lightly armed and poorly supplied Dutch soldiers who were effortlessly pushed aside by a large and ruthless Serb force is patiently and unsparingly rekindled in a recently published book. The Dutch Government's biggest

mistake, the authors conclude, was naivety. The UN "safe area" policy was a fig leaf to disguise the lack of will to take firmer action. Hoping that they were joining a pioneering co-operative venture, the Dutch found themselves trapped in a medieval military nightmare.

These experiences have not led the Dutch to Euro-scepticism. But the shine has come off the dream and they have learnt a hard lesson: tread carefully.

GEORGE BROCK
*Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime, by Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both (Penguin).

Troop withdrawal seals Moscow's Chechnya debacle

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

TWO years after Moscow embarked on its bloodiest and most disastrous military campaign in half a century, the last Russian combat troops withdrew from Chechnya yesterday, in effect ceding control of the republic to the rebel Government.

In a move marked with little ceremony, soldiers of the 205th Motorised Rifle Brigade left their base at Khankala, near the capital, Grozny, returning Chechnya to the same position it was two years ago when President Yeltsin ordered his ill-fated assault on the tiny republic.

"The whole responsibility for the situation in the republic now rests with the [Chechen] coalition Government," said Ivan Rytkin, secretary of Russia's Security Council, in a radio interview yesterday.

Although he predicted that the withdrawal of troops would build confidence between the two former enemies, the end of the conflict, negotiated by his predecessor General Aleksandr Lebed, has evoked mixed feelings in Russia. Many Russians, particu-

larly those with sons of military age, are relieved that no more conscripts will be sent to their deaths. Total casualties are estimated at between 40,000 and 90,000. In the Afghanistan war, by comparison, Soviet casualties were about 15,000.

However, there is also a sense of national humiliation that the Russian military, once regarded as the most formidable force in the world, was forced to retreat from a part of Russian territory by a small group of lightly armed guerrillas. After the recent murder of six Red Cross workers near Grozny, there is also grave apprehension that the Russian pullout will open the way for a fresh spate of killing, hijacking and hostage-taking, irritated by hardliners on both sides opposed to peace.

Much of what happens next in Chechnya will depend on the outcome of presidential elections scheduled for January 27. A crowded field of candidates includes Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, the President; Aslan Maskhadov, the Prime Minister; Movladi Udugov, the Deputy Prime

Minister; and Shamil Basayev, the country's most popular field commander.

In Moscow, the Russians have made little secret of their hopes that the race will be won by Mr Maskhadov, a former colonel in the Soviet Army, who is regarded as the most reliable and moderate figure in the Chechen leadership. If he does win, there is a hope that during the coming five-year transition, when Chechnya's final status is due to be negotiated, a long-term settlement suitable to both sides can be found. Russia has repeatedly stated that it wants the troublesome republic to remain within the Russian Federation, while Chechnya demands full independence.

Under the leadership of a moderate such as Mr Maskhadov, it may be possible to strike a compromise whereby Russia would continue to provide economic and social assistance to Chechnya, which would enjoy sovereignty in all but name. However, there are fears of renewed conflict if Mr Basayev wins. The young guerrilla leader, who masterminded the capture of Grozny last summer, is regarded in Russia as little more than a terrorist who has resorted to hijacking aircraft and seizing hostages in a hospital to get his way.

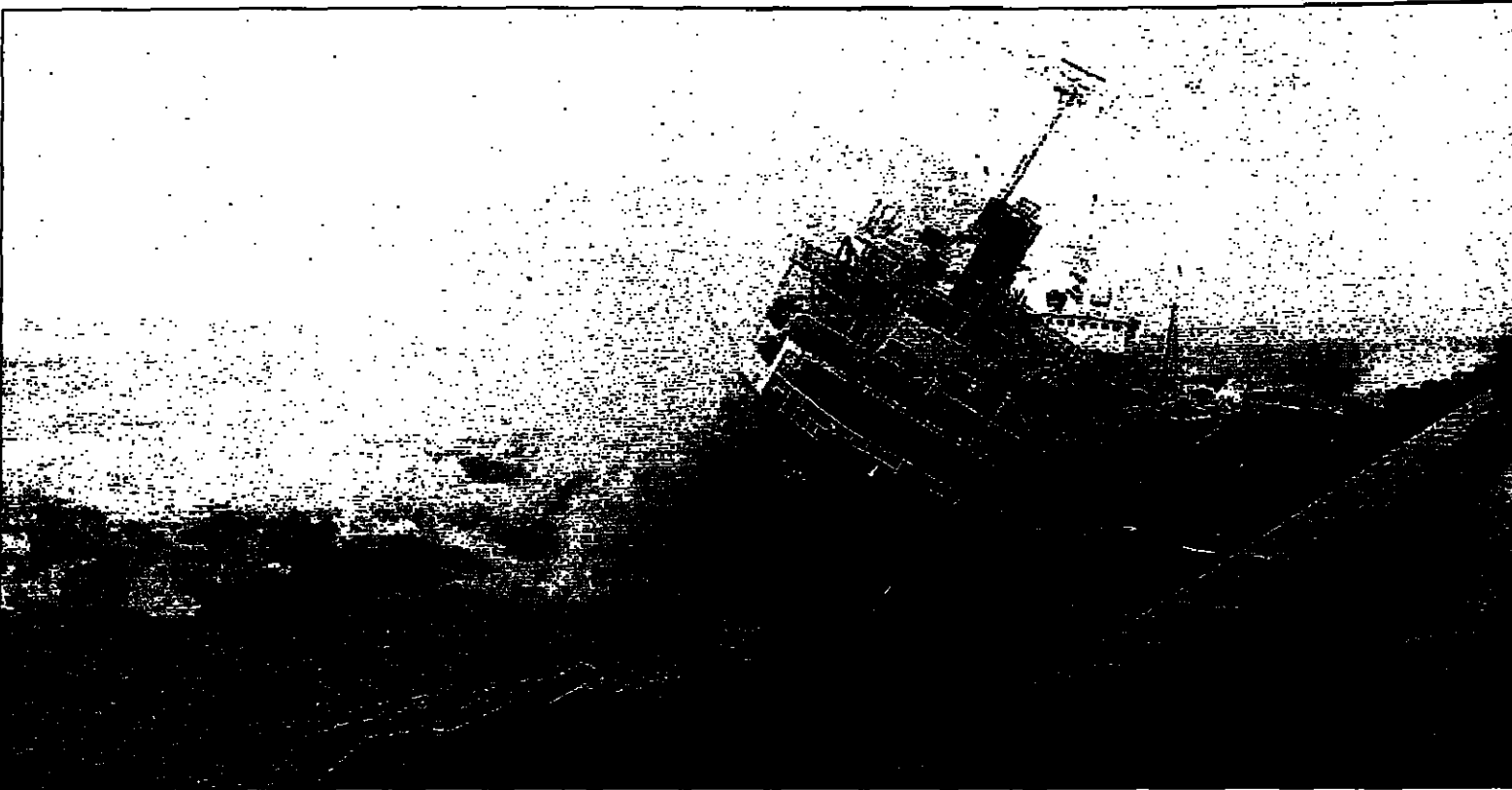
"Basayev is very popular among the Chechen people. He is a real political force to be reckoned with," said Boris Berezovsky, the deputy head of the Russian Security Council. "However, if he is elected President on January 27, this will complicate life for the Chechen people. In the eyes of world opinion, Basayev is a terrorist. Not only Russia, but no other country will recognise him as President."



Basayev: hardliner



Maskhadov: moderate



A ship lies stranded on the beach at Ponta Delgada, the capital of the Azores, after violent storms lashed the islands over the past few days, causing more than \$20 million (£12 million) damage to harbours, houses and roads. The Portuguese Cabinet

Aid for storm-damaged Azores

approved an emergency aid package on Friday. Carlos Casares, the region's government's president, said havoc wrought by 95mph gales on

Christmas Day took the toll for storm damage in the past month to more than \$60 million. Damage to Ponta Delgada harbour, battered by

boats that broke free of their moorings, was put at some \$10 million. No one was hurt, but 20 families had to flee when their homes were flooded. (Reuters)

Weather forecast, page 18



20 feared lost as ship capsizes

Athens: Twenty people, including two women and a girl aged ten, were thought to have died when a merchant ship capsized off the Greek town of Kymi on Saturday (John Carr writes). The captain is believed to have ignored storm warnings.

Greek Navy divers yesterday found six bodies in the Dystos, which was floating upside down. The ship was on a 200-mile voyage from Volos to Piraeus when two large waves hit it broadside. One officer jumped into a lifeboat just before the ship turned over. He was rescued.

British hostage 'at rebel base'

THE British mine-clearer abducted in March by Khmer Rouge guerrillas has been reported alive in a Khmer Rouge stronghold in northeast Thailand, a rebel defector said. James Pringle writes. Chhoy Win, who defected to the Government last Saturday, said he saw a Western man he thought was Christopher Howes at the rebels' Anlong Veng base.

Singapore poll attack on US

Singapore: Claims by Goh Chok Tong, the Prime Minister, that America is interfering in the island's politics have become an election issue. The US State Department had accused him of linking voter support to the upgrading of public housing. (AP)

Atlantic search called off

Cape Town: Rescuers called off a search for 28 seamen lost in the South Atlantic after their ship sank while carrying sugar from Brazil to Iraq. A Hercules C130 plane failed to spot any survivors from the *Jahan*, which went down 680 miles west of here. (Reuters)

French singer dies aged 90

Paris: Mireille, a singer decorated by the Government for fostering the careers of many stars, died from pneumonia yesterday. Mireille Hartuch, 90, was known for founding the Little Conservatory of Song, had been in hospital since December 17. (AP)

Milosevic stars in black farce

FROM ANTHONY LOYD IN BELGRADE

THERE is something grimly comical in the movements of the two figures struggling on the snow-covered Belgrade pavement. One, a riot policeman, and those of autocracy and repression, so it is actually more of a tragedy.

The Opposition celebrated its 40th day of protest with continuing demonstrations throughout Serbian towns.

The weekend began on a sombre note with the funeral in Belgrade of Predrag Starcevic, 37, killed on Christmas Eve in clashes between democracy supporters and pro-government crowds bused into the capital by the President.

News of his death was delayed for two days and was finally announced by the authorities as resulting from a congenital heart condition rather than from internal bleeding caused by beating. Such lies are commonplace here.

The demonstrators incorporate supporters from three main opposition parties as well as students, and their agenda is therefore blurred. By yesterday portraits of Bob Marley and Ayton Senna, the

late Brazilian Formula One champion, jostled with banners of coalition parties at the Belgrade rally, and the atmosphere of convivial celebration seemed hopelessly vulnerable when compared to the menace of the occupants of the fleets of police buses waiting in the side streets.

Vuk Draskovic, the principal opposition leader, though a charismatic figure whose long hair and beard suggest more a poet than politician, is prone to more rhetoric than pragmatism and has had a wildly fluctuating political career.

Arrayed against the demonstrators are the machinations

of a police state. No stranger to the concept of divide and rule, Mr Milosevic brought in police units from rural areas to Belgrade once it became apparent that there was an initial degree of fraternisation between demonstrators and police from the capital.

Though they have so far avoided large-scale confrontation, the new police forces have begun to attack small groups, individuals and foreign journalists as they leave the rallies, an intimidatory tactic that could herald much worse to come. Crucially, the Serbian Army has sought to distance itself from the Government's crackdown.

France abandons test site it says is 'safer than Paris'

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

FRANCE will tomorrow close its nuclear test centre in the South Pacific amid assurances that the site is safe and regrets that it has not been turned into a holiday camp.

After almost 200 tests, the French Atomic Energy Commission will close its nuclear base on Mururoa atoll, leaving behind soldiers and workmen to continue a two-year clearing-up operation.

President Chirac announced an end to French nuclear testing after his decision to hold a final series of trials in 1995 provoked international controversy and outrage in the South Pacific.

Amid the relief that accompanied his commitment to sign the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, M. Chirac suggested turning Mururoa into a exotic tourist destination. However, he has had to bow to reality. At 750 miles and three hours' flying time from the already remote island of Tahiti, the atoll would swallow up Fr100 million (£11.7 million) a year if it was to be made habitable.

Even if the money was available, it is by no means certain that tourists would

want to stay in a place that has staged 193 nuclear explosions.

The French authorities say that Mururoa and the test site at the Fangataufa atoll, 25 miles away, are safe. "There is three times less radioactivity there than in Paris," said a Defence Ministry spokesman. The Atomic Energy Commission says any traces of radiation caused by overground tests before 1974 have disappeared. Since then, trials have been held in deep wells drilled beneath the sea bed.

However, doubts persist. The International Atomic Energy Agency, invited by France to confirm its findings of minimal radioactivity, will not report before the end of next year. Even if it backs Paris, the controversy will continue. Some geologists say the nuclear trials have cracked the sea bed. They say the atoll may be safe now, but in the long term it could become dangerous.

Given the money involved in keeping Mururoa open and the scientific arguments over its safety, France has decided that the simplest course is to abandon it.

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Israel to remain in Hebron 'for ever' Netanyahu says

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

THE Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, yesterday pledged that Israel would stay in Hebron permanently as he faced strong resistance from some of his ministers to a troop redeployment in the West Bank town.

Mr Netanyahu must seek the approval of the Cabinet after an agreement is signed transferring 80 per cent of Hebron to Palestinian control. Five ministers have publicly said they will vote against the plan. Opposition to the proposed redeployment has also come from the central committee of Mr Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party.

Mr Netanyahu yesterday promised greater stability in Hebron after a troop pullback. "Anyone who tells you that we are leaving Hebron is telling you a lie. We are there and we are there to stay for all time," he told visiting American students. "There is continual talk about redeploying from Hebron. No, we are redeploying in Hebron."

He emphasised that the

Jewish area and the Cave of the Patriarchs — revered as the burial place of Abraham and his wife Sarah — would remain under Israeli security control. Mr Netanyahu rejected Palestinian demands for shared security of the shrine, which is holy to both Muslims and Jews.

"The Israeli Army will be in that part without any limitation," he said. "We have arranged a variety of security arrangements that will, I believe, bring more security, more stability and I believe

Airport shut in labour dispute

Jerusalem: Israel's labour federation shut down ports and airports yesterday as part of a national strike after the arrest of Shlomi Shamir, a labour official. He was held for violating court restraining orders in connection with strikes held last week. (Reuters)

Peace doubts sour the whisky trade

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

THE faltering Arab-Israeli peace process did more to dent sales of Scotch whisky to the Middle East in 1996 than Islamic fundamentalism, but deluxe brands remained the favourite tipple.

Duty on Scotch was doubled to 80 per cent in Lebanon, the region's biggest market, and sales to Syria were hit by the activities of smugglers and counterfeiters, but Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's hardline Prime Minister, is viewed as the main bogeyman by most whisky salesmen.

"What really kicked us was the wrong guy got elected in Israel. The slowdown in the peace process has damaged a lot of consumption, not just booze but other luxury items. People lack confidence in the

near future and want to save rather than spend, and there isn't much to celebrate," said a leading liquor salesman.

Fears that Islamic fundamentalism would damage business failed to materialise. Imports of Scotch are booming in Egypt, where the duty is 300 per cent, and up to 50,000 cases are smuggled yearly into "dry" but still thirsty Saudi Arabia where there is a growing fundamentalist backlash.

"People say, 'How do you make a living? The Arabs don't drink,'" the salesman said. "Yes," I say. "And Roman Catholics don't have sex before marriage."

Prohibition in Gulf states such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait is not particularly effective, but per capita Israel consumes the least of those Middle Eastern countries where alcohol is legal.

ultimately more co-operation between Palestinians and Israelis in that city."

Palestinians yesterday kept up a firebombing campaign against Jewish residents of Hebron. For the fifth consecutive day, firebombs were thrown at Jewish areas, but there were no reports of injuries.

Last night Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority, was due to hold talks with Yitzhak Mordechai, the Israeli Defence Minister, in an attempt to resolve outstanding differences over the future of Hebron. Their talks were expected to focus on security at the Cave of the Patriarchs. Israel has rejected a request for joint patrols of Palestinian police and Israeli soldiers at the holy site.

As the negotiations continued, Likud central committee members published a petition calling on the Government "not to abandon Hebron, not to allow armed Palestinian police into Hebron and not to turn over to Arafat civilian authority for the Jewish section of the city."

It was the first time that Yitzhak Shamir, the former Prime Minister and a signatory, has come out so strongly against the Government.

Mr Netanyahu suffered another blow last week when Yuli Edelstein, the Minister for Immigrant Absorption, announced he would be one of at least five ministers to vote against the agreement.

Mr Edelstein said he was concerned about the small size of the buffer zone between the Palestinian and Jewish sections of Hebron. He was particularly troubled by the proximity of one Jewish area to an Arab market, which would be reopened under Palestinian control.

Other ministers to announce their opposition to the agreement are Ariel Sharon, the Infrastructure Minister, Benny Begin, the Science Minister, Zevulun Hammer, the Education Minister, and Yitzhak Levy, the Transport Minister. Three other ministers have not yet committed themselves.

Apology for raid eases Korean tension

BY JAMES PRINGLE

NORTH KOREA yesterday issued an unprecedented apology to South Korea for an incursion by one of its submarines into the South last September. The statement, carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, for the first time expressed "deep regret" for the incident.

American diplomats have been meeting North Korean envoys in New York during the past month to urge the reclusive Pyongyang regime to apologise.

Out of 26 North Koreans who landed from the submarine, which ran aground on a beach in eastern South Korea, 24 were shot dead, one was captured alive and one is still on the loose.

South Korea, which received the text of the apology in advance, welcomed it as a chance to clear up the incident, and said it suggested that North Korea was ready to respond positively to an offer of peace talks. There was no indication whether the Seoul Government would respond to a demand from Pyongyang to return the bodies of the dead infiltrators.

The statement from Pyongyang said that North Korea would "make efforts to ensure that such an incident will not recur and will work with others for durable peace and stability on the Korean peninsula".

The apology represents a major climbdown for Pyongyang, which had previously threatened to repay blood with blood and to retaliate "a hundredfold or a thousandfold" over the deaths of its men.

Observers noted, however, that the North, which is threatened with famine, only broadcast and disseminated the news for overseas consumption, not for its domestic market. Still, analysts noted that the submarine incident, which had done much to jeopardise a fragile truce on the Korean peninsula, had apparently now been resolved.

The United States probably persuaded the North to apologise by promising more food aid, analysts said.



Anti-government protesters march against new labour laws in Seoul yesterday

Strike threatens to halt Seoul

FROM REUTERS IN SEOUL

MILITANT South Korean trade unionists yesterday threatened to paralyse Seoul with mass rallies and halt traffic on all motorways unless the Government revoked a labour law which has sparked a wave of strikes.

"Overthrow the Kim Young Sam Government," chanted the protesters in red and blue headbands. Nearly 20,000 angry workers poured into a large square in Seoul's business district yesterday. The

rally was called by the outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions.

The leader, Kwon Young Kil, threatened to clog the nation's main north-south roads by driving vehicles slowly in all lanes and blocking traffic. Many workers driving to the Seoul rally from southern provinces had protested in a similar fashion late on Saturday.

His comments raised the temperature in a general strike that has paralysed industry and which turned violent for the first time on

Saturday, when riot police used teargas to drive back the protesters.

Strikes began on Thursday after the controversial law was pushed through parliament. Industrial chaos threatened to bring South Korea's economy to a halt at least until the end of the year.

Under the new law, which was pushed through a dawn sitting of parliament on Thursday when opposition lawmakers were still asleep, companies can lay off surplus workers, hire temporary staff and replace strikers.

Patten's deputy to stay on in new regime

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN HONG KONG

HOPES of a stable handover in Hong Kong received a boost yesterday when the colony's Chief Executive-designate invited the Governor's second-in-command to continue in the new administration.

Analysts said bringing the popular Ms Anson Chan into the new government was likely to make Chris Patten, the Governor, more of a "lame duck". Yet it was welcomed in Hong Kong as giving at least a superficial boost to confidence in the final six months before the transfer of sovereignty on July 1, 1997.

"I asked Ms Chan to stay on after 1997 to work for the future Hong Kong government, and I'm very happy that she accepted," said Tung Chee-hwa, who has been chosen as the Chief Executive.

Mrs Chan said: "I know I can work very, very happily with Mr Tung because we both share a common objective, and that is to maintain a smooth transition and confidence and prosperity in Hong Kong after 1997."

A photograph of the two shaking hands after a two-hour meeting — the little known Mr Tung, 59, chosen by a Peking-backed selection committee, and the competent Ms Chan — was on the front of newspapers here yesterday.

Some analysts said the change of regime in Hong Kong was beginning six months ahead of schedule. "So Hong Kong is to get its 'dream team', the *South China Morning Post* said yesterday. "Just as Mr Tung has come to epitomise a set of prudent, businesslike values and a non-confrontational style for the future, Mrs Chan stands for the continuity of good and effective administration."

But the *Hong Kong Standard* showed a morose Mr Patten standing by a broken-down old car while Ms Chan smilingly clambered into a hotrod sports vehicle driven by a grinning Mr Tung.

Some analysts said Ms Chan's appointment may signal an early transfer of civil service loyalty to the Peking-backed administration.

Tibet bomb triggers Chinese crackdown

BY JAMES PRINGLE

A RENEWED Chinese crackdown seems likely in Tibet after a bomb explosion outside a government building injured three people, and a Tibetan former Fulbright music scholar received an 18-year prison sentence, analysts said yesterday.

The authorities called last Wednesday's bomb blast "an appalling act of terrorism

and a serious counter-revolutionary incident". Usually they make no mention of such incidents, though there are believed to have been several explosions this year, possibly caused by pro-independence forces loyal to the exiled Dalai Lama, who favours peaceful protest.

The London-based Tibet Information Network said police have set up checkpoints on the road west from Lhasa,

visited hotels to question Tibetan guests, and begun house-to-house questioning of young Tibetan men.

Ngawang Choephel, 30, the music scholar who was sentenced on Friday, was held by security forces while in Tibet to make an amateur film about traditional music and dance. He was said to have confessed to spying for a "foreign country", thought to mean America.



Imran Khan addresses a Multan crowd yesterday

Debt weapon curbs Pakistan politicians

BY CHRISTOPHER THOMAS, SOUTH ASIA CORRESPONDENT

HUNDREDS of people hoping to stand in Pakistan's elections on February 3 could be disqualified unless they pay their gas, electricity, telephone and water bills. Politicians routinely ignore such bills, and many owe hundreds of thousands of rupees.

It is the commonest form of corruption in a political system rife with fraud. *Zamindars* (landlords) are among the biggest offenders because of the amount of power and water they consume and their ability to browbeat bureaucrats. They are also the biggest tax dodgers.

The caretaker Government installed after Benazir Bhutto's administration was dismissed last month for corruption and incompetence is attempting to ensure only "clean" candidates take part, but weeding out corrupt contenders cannot be completed in time, so the Government is aiming at the easiest targets.

Miss Bhutto, who has little chance of a poll comeback, has

appealed to the courts against her dismissal by President Leghari, who turned against her after warning her privately that high-level corruption was out of control. Asif Ali Zardari, her husband and a former Cabinet minister known as "Mr Ten Per Cent", has been charged with involvement in the September murder of her brother Murtaza.

Imran Khan, the former Pakistan cricket captain, is said to have received substantial campaign funds from Sir James Goldsmith, the British financier, who is his father-in-law. His organisation, the Movement for Justice, has promised to create a "true" Islamic state. Islamabad: The fundamentalist Islamist Jamaat-Islami party plans to boycott the elections. State radio quoted Qazi Hussain Ahmad, the Jamaat leader, as saying the decision was because the caretaker Government had failed to stem corruption. (Reuters)

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A chance encounter with a 19th-century treatise on sick headaches led Oliver Sacks to draw some surprising conclusions

The secret pattern that lies behind the twists and turns of scientific history

We may look at the history of ideas backward or forward. Or we can concentrate on the evolution, the effects and influences of what we once thought. Either way, we may imagine that history will be revealed as a progression, opening like the tree of life.

What one often finds, however, is far from being a continuum. This is a conclusion that I will try to illustrate by some stories of how odd, complex, contradictory and irrational the processes of scientific discovery can be. And yet, beyond the twists and anachronisms in the history of science, perhaps there is an overall pattern to be discerned.

I began to realise how elusive scientific history can be when I became involved with my first love, chemistry. I vividly remember, as a boy, reading a history of chemistry by F.P. Armitage, a former master at my school, and learning that oxygen had been all but discovered in the 1670s by John Mayow, along with a theory of combustion and respiration.

Mayow's work was then forgotten and concealed by a century of obscurantism (and the preposterous phlogiston theory), and oxygen was only rediscovered 100 years later, by Lavoisier.

Mayow died aged 34: "Had he lived but a little longer," Armitage adds, "it can scarcely be doubted that he would have forestalled the revolutionary work of Lavoisier, and stifled the theory of phlogiston at its birth."

Was this a romantic exaltation of Mayow, or could the history of chemistry have been wholly different, as Armitage suggests?

I thought of this history in the mid-Sixties, when I was a young neurologist just starting work in a headache clinic. My job was to

make a diagnosis — migraine, tension headache, whatever — and prescribe treatment. But I could never confine myself to this, nor could many of the patients I saw.

They would often tell me, or I would observe, other phenomena: sometimes distressing, sometimes intriguing, but not strictly part of the medical picture — not needed, at least, to make a diagnosis.

Often in a classical migraine there is an aura, so-called, where the patient may see scintillating zigzags slowly traversing the field of vision. These are well described and understood. But sometimes, more rarely, patients would tell me of more complex geometrical patterns that appeared in place of, or in addition to, the zigzags — lattices, whorls, funnels and webs, all shifting, gyrating, and modulating constantly.

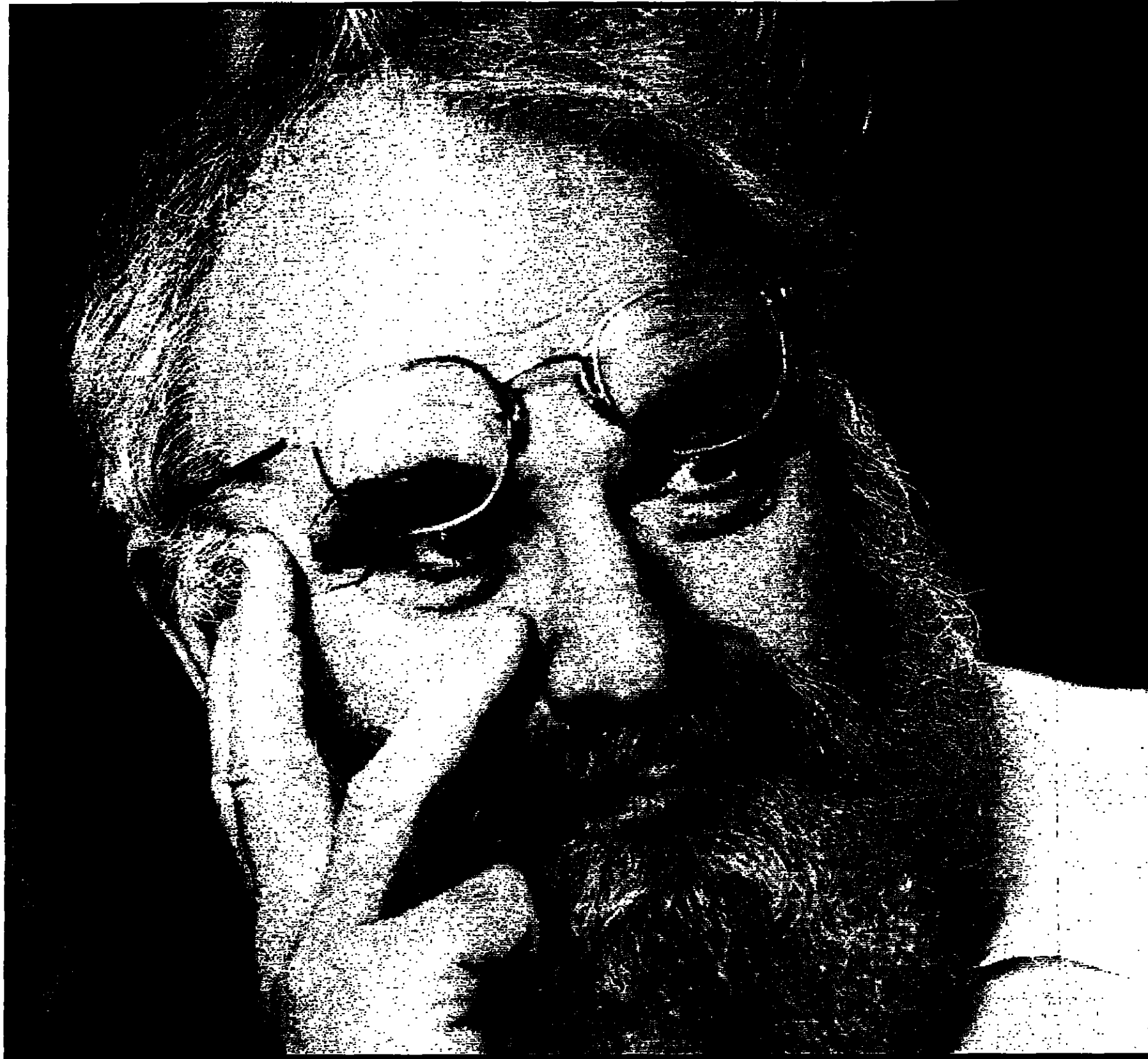
When I searched the current literature, I could find no mention of these. Puzzled, I decided to study 19th-century accounts, which tend to be

much fuller, more vivid and richer than modern ones.

My first discovery was an extraordinary book on migraine written by Edward Liveing, a Victorian physician, in the 1860s. It had a wonderful title: *On Migraine, Sick-Headache, and Some Allied Disorders: A Contribution to the Pathology of Nerve Storms*, and it was a grand, meandering sort of book, clearly written in an age far more leisurely than ours.

It touched briefly on the complex geometrical patterns I had been told of, and it referred me to a paper written a few years before, *On Sensorial Vision* by John Frederick Herschel, son of William Herschel (both father and son, as well as being eminent astronomers, had "visual" migraines and wrote about them).

I felt I had struck pay dirt at last. The younger Herschel gave meticu-



As a young neurologist Oliver Sacks was puzzled by some of his patients' headache symptoms, until he found them described in a forgotten textbook of a century before

lous, elaborate descriptions of exactly the phenomena my patients had described.

He had experienced them personally, and he ventured some deep speculations about their possible nature and origin. He thought they might represent "a sort of kaleidoscopic power" in the sensorium — a primitive, pre-personal generating power in the mind, the earliest stages, of even precursors, of perception.

I could find no adequate description of these "geometrical spectra", as Herschel called them, in the entire 100-year period between his observations and my own. Yet it was clear to me that at least one person in twenty affected with migraine experienced them on occasion.

How had these phenomena — startling, highly characteristic, unmistakable hallucinatory patterns

— evaded notice for so long? In the first place, someone must make an observation and report.

In the same year that Herschel reported this phenomena, G.B.A. Duchenne, in France, described a case of muscular dystrophy. But here the stories diverge. As soon as Duchenne's observations were published, physicians started seeing the dystrophy everywhere.

Within a few years, scores of further cases were reported and described. The disorder had always existed, ubiquitous and unmistakable. Why did Duchenne need to open our eyes? His observations entered the mainstream of clinical perception at once, as a disorder of great importance.

Herschel's paper, by contrast, sank without a trace. He was not a physician making medical observations but an independent observer of great curiosity. He considered

himself an astronomer even in regard to his own hallucinations, and indeed called himself "an astronomer of the inward".

He suspected that his observations had scientific importance, that such phenomena could lead to deep insights about the brain, but whether they had medical importance too was not in his mind.

Since migraine was usually defined as a medical condition, Herschel's observations had no professional status. After a brief mention in Liveing's book they were forgotten, ignored by the profession.

If they were to point to new scientific ideas about the mind and brain, there was no way of making the connection in the 1850s. The necessary concepts only emerged 120 years later.

These necessary concepts

emerged in conjunction with the recent development of chaos theory.

This shows that while it is impossible to predict in detail the individual disposition of each element in a system, when there are a large number of elements in interaction (as, for example, with the million-odd nerve cells in the primary visual cortex), patterns can be discerned at a higher level by using recently developed methods of mathematical and computer analyses.

There are "universal behaviours" which emerge in such interactions, behaviours which represent the ways such dynamic, non-linear systems organise themselves. They tend to take the form of complex, repetitive patterns — indeed the very sort of networks, whorls, spirals and webs that one sees in the geometrical hallucinations of

migraine. Such chaotic behaviours have now been recognised in a vast range of natural systems, from the eccentric motions of Pluto to the striking patterns that appear in the course of certain chemical reactions, to the multiplication of slime fungi and the vagaries of the weather.

With this, a hitherto insignificant or unregarded phenomenon like the geometrical patterns of migraine aura suddenly assumes a new importance.

It shows us, in the form of a hallucinatory display, not only an elemental activity of the cerebral cortex, but an entire self-organising system, a universal behaviour, at work.

Excerpted from Sacks' Forgetting and Neglect in Science by Oliver Sacks, from Hidden Histories of Science, edited by Robert B. Silvers. Published January 13 by Granta Books, price £7.99

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A genius and his fridge □ Speed of thought □ Benefits of a snooze

Einstein's cool logic



SCIENCE BRIEFING

Nigel Hawkes

WHAT is the link between Albert Einstein and the domestic refrigerator? It is a lot closer than you might think. The greatest intellect of the 20th century spent a good part of the 1920s, when he was at the height of his powers, in improving the design of the fridge. The details of this forgotten episode have been unearthed by Gene Dannan, an independent scholar, who reports his results in the January issue of *Scientific American*.

Einstein's collaborator was the Hungarian physicist Leo Szilard. The enterprise began when Einstein, then in Berlin, read an item in a newspaper reporting the death of an entire family overcome by poisonous gases from a leaking fridge. At the time, methyl chloride, ammonia and sulphur dioxide were used as cooling gases in home refrigerators. All of them are toxic. "There must be a better way," a distressed Einstein said to Szilard, and so they started

work. In the seven years between 1925 and 1932, they filed 45 patents. They developed three different types of fridge, and were successful in selling the ideas to several companies, including AEG and Electrolux. Filing the patents was no problem, as Einstein had worked in a patent office. In 1927 they sold one of the patents to Electrolux for \$750, which sounds modest, and which the firm regarded

acting as a piston to compress a refrigerant. It worked well, though to the surprise of its inventors it was disappointingly noisy.

It wailed and howled like a banshee, one witness remembers, the result of cavitation as tiny bubbles were formed and then collapsed in the liquid metal. Design changes reduced the noise to acceptable levels.

The pump never found its way into anybody's kitchen, alas; a fridge designed by Einstein would now be an antique to die for. But it was later used in pumping the coolant around fast-breeder reactors, and the collaboration with Szilard also bore fruit of a very different kind.

In July 1939 he encouraged Einstein to write the fateful letter to Franklin Roosevelt that gave warning of the possibility of the atom bomb, and of the fear that Nazi Germany might already be building one. That letter inspired the Allied bomb project, and changed history. Who knows if Einstein would have written it if he had been unaware of Szilard's metal, tested in the demanding sphere of domestic white goods?

Brains work in slow motion



EVEN a flash of inspiration moves through the brain at tortoise speed, Danish researchers have discovered. They studied how long a decision to move a finger, taken in one part of the brain, takes to reach another part of the brain where the movement is actually controlled.

The answer was about nine tenths of a second, and the two brain areas were about 24 inches apart. That means a speed for the impulses of less than 0.2 mph. Professor Albert Gjedde, of Aarhus Kommunehospital, one of those responsible, noted that the study involved "self-initiated movements", rather than reflexes caused by a reaction to outside stimuli. "At first we see one area of the brain become active, then we see another," he said. "There may be an overlap of 50 milliseconds." The team used two imaging techniques to identify the different areas of the brain in six volunteers, and to time how long it took the signals to move between them.

Sleeping off an infection



WHEN we feel off-colour, we go to sleep, and the instinct seems to be a sound one. Dr Janet Mullington, of the University of Pennsylvania Medical Centre, has studied the effects of sleep on minor infections by injecting volunteers with varying doses of endotoxins, poisons that appear on the cell surfaces of infectious bacteria such as *Salmonella*.

She found that the lowest doses increased the amount of deep sleep, the kind that is thought to be best for repairing the ravages of the day, and also stimulated production of the immune system chemicals that attack infective agents. Higher doses produced a fever, and disrupted sleep.

The results suggest that trying to enhance sleep during the early stages of infection might be helpful. Now she is investigating the effect of sleep deprivation on endotoxin challenge, to find out whether, as common sense suggests, a lack of sleep makes us more vulnerable to infection.

THE TIMES CROSSWORDS

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The anniversaries of 1997

Next year marks the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh's golden wedding, the 100th birthday of the Tate Gallery, the 700th anniversary of William Wallace's defeat of the English at Stirling Bridge and 50 years of independence for India and Pakistan. **Jack Lonsdale** highlights the arrivals, departures and significant events of the year

JANUARY

1 The British coal industry was nationalised, 1947.
2 Nathaniel Bacon (1647-1676), coloniser in Virginia, born Suffolk.
9 Karl Mannheim (1893-1947), German sociologist, died London.
10 Annette Drost-Hulshoff (1797-1848), German poet, born Münster, Westphalia.
Albert Moeschinger (1897-1985), Swiss composer, born Basel.
14 Wilson Carle (1847-1942), founder of the Church Army, born London.
21 Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517-47), poet, died London.
22 Sir Isaac Pitman (1813-97), inventor of shorthand, died Bath.
23 Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), French painter, died Le Cannet.
James Louis Garvin (1868-1947), Editor of *The Observer* 1908-42, died Beaconsfield.
24 Margaret Hungerford (1858-97), novelist, died Bandon, Co Cork.
25 Al Capone (1899-1947), American gangster, died Palm Beach, Florida.
26 Samuel Parr (1747-1825), schoolmaster and writer, born Marrow, Grade Moore (1898-1947), American singer and film actress, killed in an air crash, Copenhagen.
28 Henry VIII (1491-1547), King of England 1509-47, died London.
Reynaldo Hahn (1875-1947), French conductor and composer, died Paris.
30 Johann Quantz (1697-1773), German composer, born Oberscheden.
31 Franz Schubert (1797-1828), Austrian composer, born Vienna.

FEBRUARY

4 Ludwig Erhard (1897-1977), Chancellor of Federal Republic of Germany 1963-66, born Furth.
6 Ellen Wilkinson (1891-1947), trade unionist and politician, died London.
7 Ernst Frank (1847-1889), German composer, born Munich.
9 Sir Charles Kingsford Smith (1897-1935), Australian aviator, born Hamilton, Queensland.
11 Thomas Alva Edison (1847-1931), American inventor, born Milan, Ohio.
12 French troops invading at Pembroke were captured, 1797.
13 Sharon Turner (1768-1847), historian, died London.
14 Jervis and Nelson defeated the Spanish fleet off Cape St Vincent, 1797.
Jorgen Bertson (1897-1948), Danish composer, born Copenhagen.



Alexander Graham Bell, b. 1847

15 Philip Melancthon (1497-1560), German theologian, born Breton.
19 Blondin Jean-François Gravelle (1824-1897), tightrope walker, died London.
24 Samuel Lover (1797-1868), songwriter, novelist and painter, born Dublin.
25 Victoria Colonna (1492-1547), Italian poet, died Rome.
26 Benjamin Webster (1864-1947), actor, died Hollywood.
27 Dame Ellen Terry (1847-1928), born Coventry.

MARCH

1 Sir Thomas Brock (1847-1922), sculptor, born Worcester.
2 Horatio Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford (1717-97), writer, died London.
3 Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922), inventor of the telephone, born Edinburgh.
6 Saint Colette (1381-1447), founder of the Colettine Poor Clares, died Chant.
8 Thomas Martin (1697-1771), antiquary, born Thetford, Suffolk.
9 Sir Francis Stanley Jackson (1870-1947), England cricketer and politician, died London.
11 Henry Cowell (1897-1965), American composer, born Menlo Park, California.
13 Angela Brazil (1868-1947), writer of school stories, died Coventry.
16 Alaric Alexander Watts (1797-1864), poet, born London.
22 William I (1797-1888), first German emperor (1871), born Berlin.

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23 William Child (1606-97), organist and composer, died Windsor.
25 Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-80), mystic, born Siena, Tuscany.
27 Alfred-Victor, Comte de Vigny (1797-1863), French poet and novelist, born Loches.
31 Johann Abraham Schütz (1747-1800), German composer, born Lüneburg.

APRIL

1 Abbé Prévost d'Exiles (1697-1763), French novelist, born Hesdin.
2 Flora Annie Steel (1847-1929), novelist, born Harrow.



Gangster Al Capone, died 1947

3 Johannes Brahms (1833-97), German composer, died Vienna.
5 Sir John Gilbert (1817-97), painter, died London.
7 William Mason (1724-97), poet, died Rotherham, Yorks.
Jens Peter Jacobsen (1847-83), Danish novelist and poet, born Thisted, Jutland.
Henry Ford (1863-1947), American industrialist, died Dearborn, Michigan.
9 Simon Fraser, 12th Baron Lovat (1667-1747), Jacobite, executed, London.
10 John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647-80), poet, born Ditchley, Oxon.
Joseph Pulitzer (1847-1911), American publisher, founder of the prizes bearing his name, born Makó, Hungary.

11 Henry Beaufort (c.1374-1447), Cardinal Bishop of Winchester, died Winchester.
15 Naval mutiny at Spithead, 1797 (see also May 23).
17 Thornton Wilder (1897-1985), American writer, born Madison, Wisconsin.
Harald Saeverud (1897-1922), Norwegian composer, born Bergen.
18 Adolphe Thiers (1797-1877), French statesman, first President of the Third Republic, born Marseilles.
20 Christian X (1870-1947), King of Denmark 1912-47, died Copenhagen.
23 George Anson, Baron Anson (1697-1762), admiral, born Shugborough, Staffs.
Erik Geijer (1783-1847), Swedish poet, died Stockholm.
Lester Pearson (1897-1972), Canadian Prime Minister 1963-68, Nobel Peace laureate 1957, born Toronto.
24 Wills Cather (1873-1947), American novelist, died New York.
30 Sir Alaric Watts (1864-1947), bacteriologist, died Farnham Common, Bucks.

MAY

5 Isabella Banks (1831-97), novelist, died Dalston, Cumbria.
7 Archibald Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery (1847-1929), Prime Minister 1894-5, born London.
8 Harry Gordon Selfridge (1858-1947), department store owner, died London.
10 Jean Marie Leclair (1697-1764), French composer, born Lyons.
13 United Presbyterian Church in Scotland formed, 1847.
15 Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), Irish political leader ("the Liberator") died Genoa.
Sir Edwin Ray Lankester (1847-1929), zoologist, born London.
17 George William Forbes (1869-1947), Prime Minister of New Zealand 1930-35, died Cheviot, NZ.
18 Frank Capra (1897-1991), American film director, born Palermo, Sicily.
20 Mary Lamb (1764-1847), co-author of *Tales from Shakespeare*, died London.
21 Pieter Hooft (1581-1647), Dutch dramatist and poet, died The Hague.
22 Blackwall Tunnel under the Thames opened, 1897.
23 Naval mutiny at the Nore, 1797.
27 François-Noël Babeuf (1760-97), French politician, guillotined Vendôme.
Sir John Cockcroft (1897-1967), physicist, Nobel laureate 1951, born Todmorden, Yorks.
28 Luc de Clapiers, Marquis de Vauvenargues (1715-47), French essayist, died Paris.
29 Julius von Sachs (1832-97), German botanist, died Würzburg.
Erich Kornfeld (1897-1957), Austrian composer, born Brno.
30 Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847), first Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, died Edinburgh.

JUNE

5 Marshall Aid for European recovery inaugurated, 1947.
6 James Arate (1877-1947), dramatic

critic, died London.
9 Saint Columba (521-597), Irish missionary, died Iona.
11 Sir John Franklin (1786-1847), explorer, died near King William Island in the Arctic.
Dame Millicent Fawcett (1847-1929), suffragette, founder of Newnham College, Cambridge, born Aldeburgh, Suffolk.
12 Anthony Eden, 1st Earl of Avon (1897-1977), Prime Minister 1955-57, born Windlestone, Durham.
Alexandre Tansman (1897-86), Polish composer, born Lodz.
13 Paavo Nurmi (1897-1973), Finnish long-distance runner, born Turku.
20 Willem Barents (c. 1550-97), Dutch navigator, died in the Arctic.
24 John O'Keefe (1747-1833), dramatist, born Dublin.
25 Margaret Oliphant (1828-97), novelist, died Windsor.
27 Richard Bedford Bennett, Viscount Bennett (1870-1947), Canadian Prime Minister 1930-35, died Mickleham, Surrey.
30 Sir Thomas Pope Blount (1649-97), writer, died Tyttenhanger, Herts.

JULY

6 John Paul Jones (1747-92), American War of Independence hero, born Kirkcudbright, Scotland.
Walter Runciman, 1st Baron Runciman (1847-1937), shipowner, born Dumber.
9 Edmund Burke (1729-97), statesman, died Beaconsfield.
11 Charles Macklin (1697-1797), actor, died London.
16 Giuseppe Crespi (1665-1747), Italian painter, died Bologna.
17 Paul Delaroche (1797-1859), French painter, born Paris.
18 Antonio Vieira (1608-97), Jesuit missionary, orator and writer, died Salvador, Brazil.
20 Jean Ingelow (1820-97), poet, died London.
Max Liebermann (1847-1935), German painter, born Berlin.
21 Sebastian del Piombo (c.1485-1547), Italian painter, died Rome.
The Tate Gallery was opened, 1897.
24 Amelia Earhart (1897-1937), American aviator, the first woman to fly over the Atlantic, born Atchison, Kansas.
25 Kathleen Kennet, Lady Kennet (1878-1947), sculptor (as Kathleen Scott), died London.
28 John Walter II (1778-1847), chief proprietor of *The Times* 1812-47, died London.
30 Sir Joseph Cook (1860-1947), Australian Prime Minister 1913-14, died Sydney.

AUGUST

4 Rodney "Gipsy" Smith (1860-1947), evangelist, died at sea.
8 Jacob Burckhardt (1818-97), Swiss art historian, died Basel.
Anton Deniken (1872-1947), anti-Bolshevik general 1918-20, died Ann Arbor, Michigan.
11 Enid Blyton (1897-1968), writer of children's stories, born London.
15 Independence of India proclaimed, partitioning the country into India and Pakistan, 1947.
21 Ettore Bugatti (1881-1947), Italian car designer, died Paris.
22 Denis Papin (1647-c.1712), French physicist, born Blois.
Sir John Forrest, Baron Forrest of Bunbury (1847-1918), Australian explorer and statesman, born near Bunbury, Western Australia.
Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1847-1935), composer, born Edinburgh.
Roy Chadwick (1893-1947), aeronautical engineer, killed on a test flight.
24 First Edinburgh Festival, 1947.
26 Liberia became the first independent state in Africa, 1847.
29 Joseph Wright (1734-97), painter, died Derby.
30 Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797-1851), writer, author of *Frankenstein*, born London.



Ellen Wilkinson, died 1947

SEPTEMBER

3 Benjamin Nottingham Webster (1797-1882), actor and dramatist, born Bath.
James Hannington (1847-1885), bishop and missionary, born Hursley, West Sussex.
10 Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (1759-97), writer, died London.
11 William Wallace defeated English forces at Stirling Bridge, 1297.
16 Sir Anthony Panizzi (1797-1879), librarian of the British Museum 1837-66, born Brescello, Modena.
Grace Aguilar (1816-1847), poet and novelist, died Frankfurt am Main.



Author Enid Blyton, born 1897, with two of her characters: Noddy and PC Plod. More than 600 of her works were published

22 Alice Meynell (1847-1922), essayist and poet, born London.
25 William Faulkner (1897-1962), American novelist, born New Albany, Missouri.
26 Hugh Lofting (1886-1947), writer of children's stories, died Santa Monica, California.
Giovanni Montini (1897-1978), Pope Paul VI 1963-78, born Concesio, Italy.
27 Herbert Hensley Henson (1863-1947), bishop of Durham 1920-39, died Hintham, Suffolk.
29 Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616), Spanish novelist, born Alcalá de Henares.

OCTOBER

1 Annie Besant (1847-1933), social reformer and theosophist, born London.
1 Gregorio Martínez Sierra (1881-1947), Spanish poet, died Madrid.
2 Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934), President of the Weimar Republic 1925-34, born Poznan, Poland.
4 Jeremias Götthelf (1797-1854), Swiss novelist, born Morat.
Max Planck (1858-1947), German physicist, Nobel laureate 1918, died Göttingen.
5 Henry Howard (1769-1847), painter, died Oxford.
Alexander Chisholm (1792-1847), painter, died Rothsay, Isle of Bute.
6 Adolf von Hildebrand (1847-1921), German artist, born Marburg.
11 Admiral Duncan defeated the Dutch off Camperdown, 1797.
13 William Motherwell (1797-1835), poet, born Glasgow.
Sidney Webb, Baron Passfield (1859-1947), social reformer and historian, died near Liphook, Hants.
16 James Thomas Brudenell, 7th Earl of Cardigan (1797-1868), led the charge of the Light Brigade in October 1854, born Hambleden, Bucks.
18 Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), Flemish scholar, born Overijse.
Caneletto (1697-1768), Italian painter, born Venice.
24 Francis Turner Palgrave (1824-97), poet and critic, died London.
25 Evangelista Torricelli (1608-47), Italian physicist, died Florence.

NOVEMBER

2 Georges Sorel (1847-1922), French socialist, born Cherbourg.
4 Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47), German composer, died Leipzig.
Oscar Lorenzo Fernandez (1897-1948), Brazilian composer, born Rio de Janeiro.
8 Bram Stoker (1847-1912), novelist, author of *Dracula*, born Dublin.
10 William Hogarth (1697-1764), painter and engraver, born London.
12 Emma Orcy, Baroness Orcy (1865-1947), novelist, died London.
14 Sir Charles Lyell (1797-1875), geologist, born Kirriemuir.
Mrs Belloc Lowndes (1868-1947), novelist, died Eversley Cross, Hants.
15 Ancourin Bevan (1897-1960), politician, born Tredgar.
Sir Sacheverell Sitwell Bt. (1897-1983), poet and critic, born Scarborough.
18 Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), French philosopher, born Carla-le-Comble.
20 The wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten, Duke of Edinburgh, 1947.
23 Gabor Matray (1797-1875), Hungarian composer, born Nagykata.
29 Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848), Italian composer, born Bergamo.

DECEMBER

1 Samuel Courtauld (1876-1947), industrialist and art patron, died London.
2 Hernando Cortés (1485-1547), Spanish conquistador, died near Seville.
The first part of Sir Christopher Wren's St Paul's Cathedral — the choir — was opened for worship, 1697.
6 John Fernstrom (1897-1961), Swedish composer, born I-Chang, Hupei, China.
7 Saint Ambrose (339-397), Doctor of the Church, died Milan.
9 George Cross (1847-1912), singer, actor and writer, born London.
13 Heinrich Heine (1797-1836), German poet, born Düsseldorf.
14 Edward John Higgins (1864-1947), third general of the Salvation Army 1929-34, died New York.
Stanley Baldwin, 1st Earl Baldwin of Bewdley (1867-1947), Prime Minister 1923-24; 1924-29; 1935-37, died Axtell Hall, Worcs.
17 Sir Bernard Spilsbury (1877-1947), pathologist, died London.
23 Martin Opitz (1597-1639), German poet, born Bunzlau.
26 John Wilkes (1727-97), politician, died London.
29 William Crotch (1775-1847), organist and composer, died Taunton.
30 Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), mathematician and philosopher, died Cambridge, Mass.

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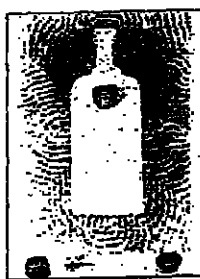
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ARTS THE WEEK AHEAD



■ VISUAL ART

New British painting goes on parade for the *About Vision* show at MCMA in Oxford
OPEN: Now
REVIEW: Tomorrow



■ THEATRE

Jessica Lange makes her British stage debut in *A Streetcar Named Desire* at the Haymarket
OPENS: Tonight
REVIEW: Wednesday



■ POP

One for the girls: Boyzone return to home turf for a night at the RDS, Dublin
GIG: Tomorrow
REVIEW: Thursday



■ MUSIC

Robert King leads his musicians in a New Year's Eve celebration at the Wigmore
CONCERT: Tomorrow
REVIEW: Thursday

There is no Horror like British Horror. It has the imprimatur of the most reliable popularity poll in the arts — cinema. And 19th-century British horror still rules. When our flag flew over the Empire on which the sun never set, and these small islands controlled a quarter of the world's trade, we plunged to the sea bottom in everything as well, including, it seems, everlasting nightmares. Jekyll and Hyde, Count Dracula the vampire, *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and others proudly showed off the lower depths.

It would be neat to tie in these literary manifestations of nightmares with the discoveries of Freud and the almost parallel invention of the cinema, and there is much in common between these three weird sisters. But the greatest horror of them all preceded the three sisters. It was written in 1817 at the Villa Diodati, by Mary Godwin, a teenager in love who sat down one stormy night and began what became commonly

New life in Mary Shelley's old monster

known as the Frankenstein story.

Christopher Frayling is the latest interpreter of what has become the legend behind the legend, and in his television programmes he recently revisited the evidence with all the aplomb of Poirot.

Yet what seems to me overwhelming about Frankenstein is his connection with science. Dr Jekyll shares this to some extent — that life-changing potion resembles various experiments with drugs at the time and reflects the sometimes radical changes of character brought on by good old-fashioned alcohol. And Dracula's blood-sucking self-regeneration has some connection with primitive black arts or early science, while Holmes was all Darwin. But Mary Godwin, soon to be Shelley, was the one who detonated the purest explosion.

It could be argued that all

lasting works of imaginative literature must come out of a primal natural condition and the Greeks proved that, if proof were needed. Certainly there is enough of the primal about the turbulent days beside Lake Geneva to give Mary a flying start. She was in love with one wild young poet, Shelley, and in the company of the most famous young poet of his day, the "mad bad and dangerous to know" Lord Byron. Byron was travelling with Polidori, the author of the first real vampire story and a man who committed suicide in his mid-20s. There were sex, drugs and literature at the Villa Diodati, and what was produced might ultimately see off many of the products of today's sex, drugs and rock'n'roll.

On the other hand, sex, drugs and other stimuli have haunted the dreams and lives of writers for years without detonating such a



key work in popular culture. Mary's own double grief was most likely the dynamite. Her mother had died just after she had been born, and she had lost a baby daughter.

But the real cause of the carrying power of this story is, I suggest, its association with the possibilities of science (a point well emphasised in Kenneth Branagh's recent underrated film, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*). Mary had seen the public electrical experiments which had galvanised dead bodies — of hanged men and newly suffocated frogs — into lifelike muscular convulsions. Electricity was heralded as the true force of life. Mary's wild dream was that she could literally kick-start her dead child back into a breathing being.

All this became what she herself for ever referred to as "the creature". What you could say is that from that day on, especially in this century, progress has conspired to give the truth to her inspiration. New hearts are exchanged for old — unthinkable in Mary's day; new

livers, new hips, new arms, new blood, new bone, where will it end? New brain? And the arrival of the gene, with claims being made for the isolating and redeployment of specific genes, all this has brought Frankenstein to a second — and less preposterous — life. By an accident of genius, it seems to me that the young girl who had eloped with the radical poet heard before others the faint murmur of what was to be an earthquake in science, and responded to it at once and wholly.

Meanwhile, Frankenstein has become a commonplace, the creature of advertising and kiddy foods and multiple masks, jokes and kits, as well as the stuff of films ancient and modern. He has been terrifying, pathetic, forlorn and vulnerable. He is far more potent than any creature from the deep or any single creature from out of

space. I doubt if the three-volume edition of Mary's book is much read now, save by scholars and even they might use the abridged single volume for easier reference. But it remains one of the most extraordinary works in our recent literature, begun as thunder and lightning stormed across the mountains and the lake, and a bolt from the heavens seared the imagination of a young English girl in Switzerland.

Professor Lewis Wolpert, admirable man, fine scientist, and eminent adamant, declares on Radio 4 this morning that the arts had "nothing whatsoever" to contribute to science. Coming up at the Royal Institution is a lecture by Richard Holmes, taken from the wreckage of a disastrous course of lectures ungiven by Coleridge at about the time of the creation of Frankenstein and now advised as extraordinarily insightful. A great artist on the sciences? We shall see. Professor Wolpert, we shall see...

God bless all who sell in her

The world's most expensive building will be formally opened next month, but already the Tokyo public is flocking to see the £1 billion colossus which, according to its architect, Rafael Viñoly, is "a building without doors, open 24 hours a day, with space for 28,000 people at a time".

The great feature of the Tokyo International Forum is an elliptical hall which towers above the street like an ocean liner in a 1930s travel poster. The difference is that the walls are sheer glass, 70 metres high and 260 metres long. Inside the aquatic feel intensifies, for the steel trusses of the roof plunge downwards, creating the shimmering impression of a vast ship's hull seen from under water.

The Forum is a very Japanese marriage of commerce and culture, mixing theatres with conference halls and trade shows, political conventions with rock concerts. "It has shopping, a large food court, 14 restaurants, art galleries and a TV station," Viñoly says. "It also has a very large heating and cooling plant which sells air conditioning and steam to buildings near by, generating revenue to support cultural events."

Viñoly has designed his

Marcus Binney takes a voyage through a £1bn high-tech marvel of architecture

cool, calming, ethereal interior as a complete contrast to the rampant, neon-lit commercialism of the city outside. It also reflects what he likes most about Tokyo — "its multiplicity of levels, allowing you to go down three floors below the street or find cafes on the fourth, fifth and sixth floors above. It is a city that invites you to explore."

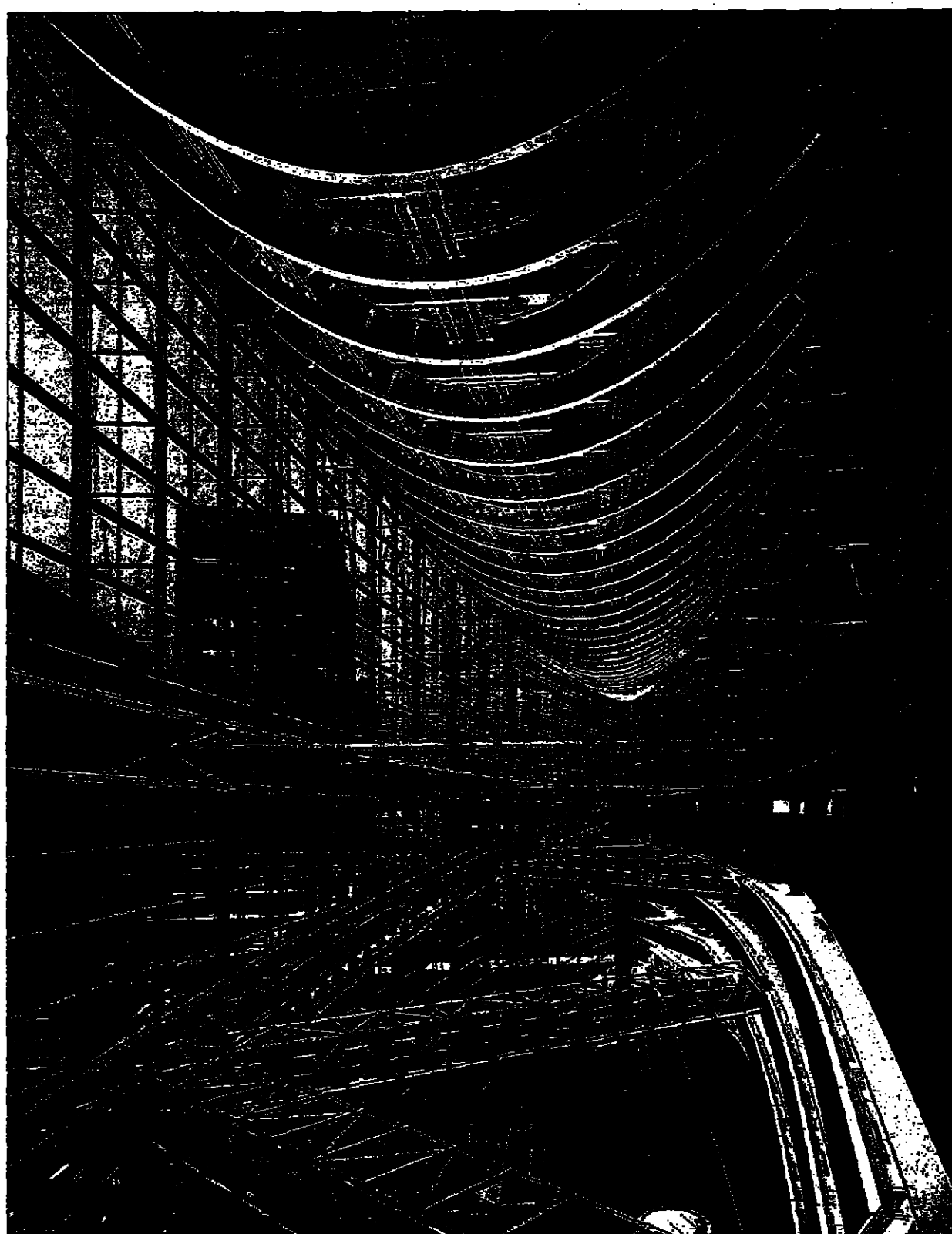
He wanted, he says, "to create a sense of limitless space and complete transparency when seen from outside". He achieved this by jacking up the boxes containing the four theatres, allowing open circulation beneath. "You feel you are almost flying. The glass hall is crossed by glass bridges which I thought might give people heart attacks, but you very soon get accustomed to it," he says. Viñoly admits that he thought he would lose the competition because of the earthquake problem. But, with the help of a young

Japanese structural engineer, Kunio Wanabe, he has devised a structural system of very big columns anchored on two sides to a vast mass of sheer wall.

"The maintenance of the building is automatic," Viñoly says. "Both the inner and outer surfaces of the glass have self-cleaning mechanisms. There are robots to paint the steelwork, similar to those which clean the inside of oil pipelines. On the roof, solar collectors gather enough heat to warm the glass hall."

Theatres and rehearsal halls also exploit technology. "Computerised mechanisms can simulate any acoustic condition you desire," he says. A chamber orchestra rehearsing in a small hall can program in the acoustics of a large hall filled with people. The ceiling of the 5,000-seat theatre is equipped with 650 loudspeakers, installed by an American acoustician and programmed to allow for every permutation of early and late arrival times.

Every space can be transformed into a TV studio with blackout curtains and screens. When the lights go up, whole walls illuminate. Thinking of staging a fashion show? You can shape the room to your requirements by putting your hands on a model of the building, moulding the ceiling into any curve you want, and watching it take shape above. What thrills Viñoly is that he was able to control the detail throughout the four years the Forum took to build. "I moved 45 of my staff to Tokyo to help to run the project. The big difference is that in Japan everyone works as a team to achieve the objective, whereas in America everyone is worried about who will sue whom."



"The great feature of the Tokyo International Forum is an elliptical hall which towers like an ocean liner in a travel poster"

Plenty of gold to mine

EVEN before the first golden power chord soared from Tim Wheeler's guitar, the signs were that Ash's biggest headline gig to date — and their first since returning from their lengthy American sojourn — was going to be a triumph. As the curtain was raised to reveal a backdrop of the distinctive Ash logo, more than 7,000 teenagers cheered as one, heightening the moods of anticipation and celebration that engulfed The Point.

Ash dutifully rose to the occasion and set the party

Ash The Point, Dublin

alight thanks to a frantic early period where Messrs Wheeler, Hamilton and McMurray whizzed through one glorious pop nugget after another: *Goldfinger*, *Jack Names the Planets*, *Petrol* and particularly *Oh Yeah* sent the kids into a frenzy.

It may have been too much to expect the band to keep up this pace and some of the material definitely suffered in comparison to their sparkling hit singles, but as long as Ash continue to follow successfully the musical yellow-brick road that *The Undertones*, *Nirvana* et al trod before them, their future looks very bright indeed. "This is my last ever teenage show," declared Wheeler, who turns 20 early next year, wistfully, before launching into a fast and furious *Kung Fu*. And before we could catch our breath he was gone, leaving more than a few of us marvelling, somewhat enviously, at just how much Ash have already achieved.

NICK KELLY

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OPERA: A double helping of Britten in the Big Apple; plus an unhappy South Bank marriage

Dark summer's night

Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* received an improbably belated premiere at the Metropolitan Opera, with a lavish, luminous production by Tim Albery. In a debut with the company, The sets, by Albery's frequent collaborator Anthony McDonald, appeared to be strongly influenced by David Hockney's theatre designs: great planes of gaudy, fluorescent colour tilted against a deep, velvety gloom, which was occasionally enlivened by glowing, childlike sketches. The production placed most of the action on a modestly scaled promenade within the confines of the Met's cavernous stage.

Albery's *Dream* takes place in the mind, perhaps of a sleeping child, but this does not clutter the already complicated action with an adventurous programme. It was a very dark production, appropriate to the murky, sometimes sinister doings of the summer night. The forest was suggested only by one enormous tree branch that pierced through several scenes; it was Britten's shimmering, sylvan music, swirling freely in the fathomless darkness, that created the fairy forest.

The musical values were

A Midsummer Night's Dream New York

unexceptionable: David Atherton, who conducted the Met's premiere of *Death in Venice* two years ago, led the orchestra in a lovely performance that seemed to rustle and murmur like a living thing. Jochen Kowalski wasn't always audible as Oberon, but he played the part well, striding about imperiously in a foppish green velvet suit and scarlet waistcoat. Sylvia McNair was ravishing as his queen; in the third act, "Music ho, music such as charmeth sleep" rippled through the house like a suave bolt of summer lightning.

The young lovers, puzzlingly costumed first in boating togs then as long-haired hippies in tie-dyed togas, were well cast, with Rodney Gilby and Jane Bunnell as Demetrius and Helena, and Kurt Streit and Nancy Gustafson particularly charming as Lysander and Hermia. Peter Rose, another British debutant, played Bottom with amusing "magical mirth" that propelled a deft version of the panto of

Pyramus and Thisby. The weakest member of the cast was Puck, played by a stocky young Hollywood actor called Nick Stahl, who lumbered about cloddishly and spoke his lines as though they were in a foreign language. The four fairies were capably portrayed by lads wearing tutus.

Earlier this season, the New York City Opera showed signs of an artistic renaissance with a visionary production of *The Turn of the Screw*, directed by Mark Lamos, in the first of village hall dramatics. Much of Opera Brava's time is spent playing in small theatres and to picnickers in the grounds of stately homes, and its portable, compact platform looks odd in the middle of the Queen Elizabeth Hall stage.

The strongest dramatic moments are those where the performers are allowed to follow their instincts. Most of the directorial touches are unfunny, beginning with the rushing about during the overture; there is also some silly business for a very precious

JAMIE JAMES

Village Mozart

Conventional operatic wisdom has it that *The Marriage of Figaro* is the most perfect work in the repertory, and that performance, no matter how imperfect, always succeeds. It is false, but only if you count productions such as Opera Brava's post-Christmas show that work while still being unworthy of Mozart's masterpiece: the opera is played as an amusing divertimento, with none of the simmering tensions that motivate the plot.

A programme note claims that the production, by Olivia Fuchs in designs by Tahira Kharibian, is inspired by the paintings of Goya, but if it evokes a period it is the golden age of village hall dramatics. Much of Opera Brava's time is spent playing in small theatres and to picnickers in the grounds of stately homes, and its portable, compact platform looks odd in the middle of the Queen Elizabeth Hall stage.

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The Marriage of Figaro Queen Elizabeth Hall

Don Basilio and the orchestra. Otherwise, this is a bland *Figaro*, lacking any hint of the class war and sex war that should make it such scorching drama.

Biting Mozartian wit is also hard to obtain from a small ensemble, and some scrappiness apart the orchestra plays well enough for Ian Page. Best of the cast was Christopher Parke's totally reliable Figaro, a keen, focused baritone who sings words with communicative clarity. Performing in English is part of Opera Brava's credo, but words were not always clear, not even from Amanda Buckland's musical, smoothly-sung Susanna. After a pale start, Christopher Goldsack made a good Count, and Judy Slater was a cheeky Cherubino. Bronck Pomorski, who should stick to his day job as Opera Brava's artistic director, was woefully out of tune in his two bass roles, and Robert Carlin was nasal in his two tenor parts.

JOHN ALLISON

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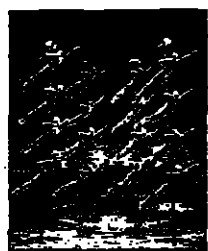
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■ OPERA

Regal return: the superb Josephine Barstow takes the title role in *Gloriana* in Leeds
OPENS: Thursday
REVIEW: Saturday



■ CIRCUS

The magical Cirque du Soleil company comes to the Albert Hall with *Saltimbanco*
OPENS: Thursday
REVIEW: Saturday



■ FILM

Tough guys learn to survive in New York: Robert De Niro stars in *Sleepers*
OPENS: Friday
REVIEW: Thursday



■ BOOKS

Memories of Gerald Durrell: the author is portrayed in a new biography
IN THE SHOPS: Now
REVIEW: Saturday

ARTS
TUESDAY TO
FRIDAY
IN SECTION 2

Where Kean's spirit went for a Burton

If These Walls Could Speak: Benedict Nightingale launches a *Times* series about buildings that have a special artistic resonance, with a look at the Old Vic

My most-loved theatre? To someone in my hyperactive profession, that is a tricky question, like asking a car to name its favourite petrol station or David Frost his pet airport lounge or Madonna her No 1 bedroom. It could be the Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells, where a moustachioed villain sent me screaming in terror from my first-ever pantomime, or the gymnasium of the Seaford school where I made a startling stage debut as the Third Witch in *Macbeth*.

If charm were the criterion, my choice would be, well, the Criterion. I still feel a certain thrill when I go down those stairs, past Victorian tiles commemorating Flotow, Boieldieu and other forgotten composers, and into the pretty little auditorium its original owners proudly described as "an underground Temple of Drama into which it is necessary to pump air to save the audience from being asphyxiated". Or it could, and probably should, be the Royal Court, where I came as a teenager in my angriest shirt and suede shoes to watch John Osborne launch a theatrical renaissance back in 1956.

But, no, it has to be the Old Vic. That was where I was taken again and again as a boy to see Richard Burton and John Neville in *Shakespeare* and where, as a cub reviewer, I saw the members of Laurence Olivier's National Theatre Company prove themselves worthy of the customised Oz on the South Bank into which they unwillingly moved in 1976.

The Vic's current owners, Ed and David Mirvish, have spent millions restoring the Victorian auditorium behind the old Georgian frontage. All is now gold-and-amber lustre, and very nice too. But my first memories are of a shabby, run-down theatre where charged fingers and toes, rather than arms and legs, to those in search of the classics. To an earnest 14-year-old, the place radiated high seriousness. Today, too, there is a texture, a richness you cannot miss. Think not only of the ghost who reputedly has haunted the Vic

when would-be developers have come up with phillistine plans — Lillian Baylis, ferociously prowling about in her academic robes — but of those who could also be hovering in the wings. Kean acted there. Grimaldi clowning there. Paganini gave his farewell concert there. Melba sang there. De Valois choreographed *Markova* there. And there Olivier, Sybil Thorndike, Edith Evans, Peggy Ashcroft, Ralph Richardson, Michael Redgrave, Robert Stephens and many others made their names or did their best work or both.

Mark you, a more unlikely candidate for an ex-officio National Theatre was often hard to imagine. For much of its history, the Vic had

melodrama staged on the cheap for often rowdy spectators.

As early as 1820 Hazlitt felt he was in "a bridlewell or brothel, amidst pickpockets, prostitutes and mountebanks, instead of being in the precincts of Mount Parnassus with the Muses". In 1849 Charles Kingsley wrote of the beggary and rascality of London pouring in to hear their low amusement from the neighbouring gin palaces and thieves' cellars. Mad with resentment at the cheers for the lingo who was playing opposite his Othello, Kean declared at the curtain call he had "never acted to such a set of ignorant, unmilitated brutes as I see before me".

Vic audiences always had their favourites. Mayhew recalled the yells of "Bray-vo Vincent, go it me nulp!" as an actress called Eliza Vincent seized a series of villainous Cossacks by their collars and gave them a hearty shaking. And they did more than boo the baddies. When Bill Sykes dragged Nancy round the stage by her hair and then dashed out her brains, the response was a deafening "roar of a dozen escaped menageries" and language never "dreamt of in Bedlam".

In the 1850s more than 2,000 people would sometimes crowd tipily into much the space now occupied by 1,100. That presumably explains why during one Boxing Day panto some 16 people were killed in a panicky rush after cries of "fire" greeted the then unusual sight of a man lighting a match in the stalls.

It was in hopes of bringing order to the place that a most unlikely lessee, the temperance reformer Emma Cons, eventually transformed it into the Royal Victoria Hall Coffee Tavern, planning to do "the working and lower middle classes recreation such as the music-hall offers but without the attendant moral and social disadvantages".

By 1914 the theatre was in the hands of Lillian Baylis, her niece, who became the most improbable yet most important producer of her day. Stories galore are told of eccentricities that included Baylis



Richard Burton in a 1953 Old Vic *Hamlet*, with John Neville in the background and, possibly, a teenaged Nightingale in the audience

falling in mid-conversation to her knees to ask God for inexpensive actors, and of solecisms such as telling Charles Laughton after a poor first night: "I'm sure you did quite a good Macbeth". But the real point is that during her 23-year tenure she succeeded in her aim of providing inspirational opera, ballet and Shakespeare "for the masses".

Giulio gave his first *Hamlet* at the Vic, as did Olivier and Guinness — but then what major modern classical actor did not pass through those groggy dressing

rooms on to sets that, money always being short, became famous for their sparseness?

Myself, I date my love of Shakespeare from seeing Burton's cunning Henry V, his raging Coriolanus, his fierce Welsh Calliban, his quietly demonic Iago, and a Hamlet so immediate it could have left me echoing the comment of an earlier Old Vic theatregoer: "They did 'ave a lot of trouble in the family, them 'unlurs". We sat on seats not a lot comfier than the wooden benches the Victorians occupied, and were transported by that smouldering power.

Since then, I have sat in slightly softer seats, marveling at the wit Maggie Smith brought to Fardoul's *Beaux Strangers*, the subtlety of Gielgud and Richardson in Pinter's *No Man's Land*, Redgrave's tormented Master Builder, Rigg and McCowen in Tony Harrison's elegantly updated *Misanthrope*, Olivier as a 19th-century Shylock with goaty protruding teeth... but there are so many performances worth remembering and, I suspect, there are many more to come.

Since the National replaced it, the Vic has had its ups and downs.

Jonathan Miller directed Eric Porter's *Leah* there. Simon Callow staged *Carmen Jones* there, Peter O'Toole notoriously resuscitated 19th-century hamminess in the form of a baying, barking Macbeth; but the theatre has yet to find itself a clear role. Will Peter Hall's impending series of revivals, combined with Dominic Dromgool's premieres, allow the famous old place to acquire a distinctive new personality? I cannot think of a better new year's wish for theatrical 1997.

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Matthew Parris



■ Winter? Then it must be waning carols, warring royals and the wrong sort of snow

Over the years I have noticed how formulaic is the content of both news and commentary from Fleet Street. There is now no reason why the process should not be automated and I have been working on a computer software package to replace editors. Daily papers could be produced with just a handful of staff working unfussed hours.

Take the annual leading article about the return of the Elgin Marbles. This may be loosely pegged to some "event", but the event is of little consequence: a trigger for an amusing exchange of readers' views, to which I always look forward. The views never change, the marbles never move and there is no reason why the Elgin correspondence could not be programmed in advance for a set fortnight (say) in December, every year.

Then there is the British Summer Time debate: the publication of statistics for English road deaths, Scottish accidents before sunrise, a leading article, an opinion column by Edwina Currie and a lively correspondence for about a week.

This can be reliably pegged to the last Sunday in October. As reliably, we can schedule the debate about May Day and whether we need a new public holiday; the annual rerun of the abdication question (after the Queen's birthday) can be prepared for, with opinion columns commissioned from Lord Blake and Lord St John of Fawley.

Some stories, like the pros and cons of a European single currency, occur roughly fortnightly. But it should be simple to arrange a mini-storm, following a quote from a politician, from Monday to Wednesday inclusive every two weeks — with the appropriate leader column.

Should we smack children? This is a twice-yearly issue, while the impending bankruptcy of Eurotunnel occurs about three times a year. The future of the Royal Yacht debate is biannual: the future of the Gurkhas biennial. "Future of" concerns need only the slightest of news pegs, easily contrived: thus future of the Church of England/West End theatre/the British sitcom/supper stories can be ready for use months in advance. "Decline of" stories likewise of red squirrels/hats/the British high street/the art of conversation/British seaside resorts/chivalry — these stories can be dusted down once or twice a year.

They are essentially trivia. But space for the great issues of our time can be reserved, too. Every couple of months there must be a commentary about the awakening "tiger economies" of the East: human embryology; the possibili-

'Many stories can be dusted down once or twice a year'

ties of the Internet and the break-up of the two-parent family (opinion column from a right-wing woman please). Every year, as readers groan, I do my Reasoned Case for Homosexual Reform column. I could book my Monday well in advance. There is Prince Charles and architecture, Anglican "reforms", Muslim religious education, computer porn, TV violence, adoption. All can be slotted in as required. Optional extras are the phenomenon of Delia Smith, the rights of divorced fathers, the increase/decline of pet dogs/cats, the growth of obesity among human beings (or pets) and the fashionability of celibacy. These can be interspersed with a vigorous correspondence on whether we put the milk or the tea in first, and five articles a year from a right-wing doctor telling us that a little of what we fancy does us good. These can be programmed into next year's papers now.

For my computer programme I envisage a central core of articles fixed to set dates, an outer ring of articles in a holding pattern, waiting to be triggered as or when required, and (in between) a selection of seasonal articles to be slotted in as appropriate. Thus, spring should bring the annual piece about the death of package holidays just as autumn brings its counterpart article reporting another bumper year for package holidays. Similarly with global warming.

Also for spring is reserved the piece about why there are no cuckoos left for us to hear first, why we may be heading for a summer drought and whether the royals are setting a good example by their glitzy skiing holidays.

For the summer we have articles about the British in Tuscany, skin cancer and the decline of wild flowers. Decline of cricket articles and "Pheew! What a scorcher!" articles await, as do surveys of smog, inner-city riots and burgeoning ice-cream sales. The Queen will be snubbed somewhere abroad (probably Australia) and there will be a *Times* third leader about the silly season, blissfully unaware that it is part of it.

Autumn brings articles on the management of party conferences, suicides among farmers and whether the Royal Family is setting a good example by hunting. Should fireworks be banned?

Winter brings a lament on the decline of the Christmas carol, the unpreparedness of local authorities for snow, Royal absences at Sandringham at Christmas... and a column by Matthew Parris on how every column but his own is predictable.

Youngsters in care in Britain would benefit from a colour-blind adoption policy, says Paul Barker

Finding homes for our lost children

James Barrie's parentless Peter Pan says he is one of the "lost children". Steven Spielberg took Barrie's story and gave it an extraterrestrial twist in his modern fairytale film *ET* (BBC1, New Year's Day). *ET* is yet another lost child.

But, like all fairytales, *Peter Pan* and *ET* have a real-life psychological point. No society is without its lost children. Today, in Britain, they are the many thousands in local authority care. They are the subject of increasing scandal and concern, as witness the Prime Minister's reported intention to include proposals for a new Adoption Act in the Conservatives' general election manifesto.

Of course, there are far fewer than in Barrie's day. Then, orphanages and workhouses tried to cope with the abandoned and the bereft. They were put out to learn a trade as soon as possible. Big houses would have been short of servants, and Kitchener even more desperate for soldiers, otherwise. Many were shipped out to the Dominions.

Much has changed, including the social acceptability of keeping, rather than giving away, children born outside marriage. Those who now find themselves in care homes are a highly untypical sample of the population. Nor are they so young now. It is seldom hard to find adoptive parents for babies and very young children, provided they are able-bodied. Care homes mostly house teenagers — often with deep troubles. They shuttle in and out of foster

families. They seldom come near to being adopted.

But this is not something capable of a magic solution. Barrie could wave his dramatist's wand and give Peter a substitute mother, Wendy, Spielberg could get *ET* back into the spacecraft. The Prime Minister is right to be concerned about what has been going on in care homes and in social services departments. But his apparent intention to take adoption approval entirely out of the hands of social workers is no abracadabra answer.

In my experience, charities are just as likely to take a hard line on, for example, inter-racial adoptions — and many of the most ludicrous examples of feet-dragging about adoption approval now relate to race. It was an adoption adviser at a charity who once told me that it was better for a black child to remain in care than to go to a white family to be adopted, or even fostered. Nor are the courts without sin in all this.

The ethnic definitions here are, in real life, very slippery. Many of the children are mixed-race (that is

precisely why some of them are in care). But the doctrine is applied with the ferocity of Alabama in the bad old days. There are "whites" and there are "blacks"; no variants are allowed. So a half-white child is deemed to be black, not white. A Sikh child, also defined as "black", may be placed with a Caribbean family even though Sikhs themselves would feel that the two groups have very little, culturally, in common. (The latest census results show that even "Asian" is a term that lumps together wide divergences of experience.)

Some social workers, especially in London, even reckon that Turkish or Greek Cypriots are honorary blacks, because they belong to an ethnic minority. They might therefore be allowed to adopt a mixed-race child, in preference to "white" parents; or a Cypriot child could be "correctly" placed with a Nigerian family.

It is a tragedy of (mostly) good intentions. Obviously, it would be the best of all possible worlds if an

ethnically matching parent could always be found. But most would-be adopters are white. It cannot be said too often that Britain is *not* a multiracial society. Ninety-five per cent of the population is of English, Scottish, Irish or Welsh descent. It is no use trying to use adoption policy to battle against this demographic fact (although in London, where many of the latest policies are pursued, the ethnic proportion is much higher).

The so-called professionals in this field are mostly, it must be said, a very odd bunch. You only have to go into a care home to begin to wonder about the motives that brought most of the staff there. They are usually without any qualifications for their (very tough) work: many were in care themselves. Even the academics who concern themselves with this shadowland of the welfare state seem not to see the wood for the trees. Some of them argue that care homes are as good as, or better than, a family.

Churchill once said that democracy was the worst way of running a country — until you considered the

alternatives. Similarly, everyone knows family life is not all sweetness and light. But what is better?

Certainly not a care home. I remember, all too vividly, a respected academic telling me how important it was to keep the children's home system running; it had "special strengths". He had taught social work courses for many years. Only later did it emerge that he was part of a child pornography network.

Nothing can be done overnight. That would cause more problems than it solved. But the system of children's homes has become a moral cesspit. (This is not, of course, to condemn every individual home.) Over a shortish period, they should be closed down as the workhouses eventually were. Only the most traumatised young people should be treated differently, and they should be given truly professional care. Social workers, charities and the courts should be given formal instructions to operate a colour-blind adoption policy.

None of this, probably, requires a new Adoption Act. But it does require determination. We are talking about a tiny minority of children. Many come from what is now fashionable to call the underclass. We should do everything we can to encourage them to get out, and get on. They should not be left in a lost world. They must be helped to find themselves.

Paul Barker is a Senior Fellow of the Institute of Community Studies

Defenders of the faith

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Prince of Wales have a common aim: to promote a spiritual revival that strengthens belief without fostering religious bigotry



George Carey is leading his flock by example, while Prince Charles has refused to be narrow-minded



and seems to have thought wisely. He has absorbed a genuine ecumenism.

There may be conservatives in the Church of England, as there are in the Roman Catholic Church, who think that their subjection of their Church's position is the sole truth, that other Christians are in error and that Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and followers of other faiths are just so many types of pagan.

Prince Charles has explicitly rejected this view, and has been criticised for doing so. Of course, Prince Charles is right to see the virtues of the teaching of Islam, he is right to attend the opening of a Hindu temple, he is right to show his respect for all branches of Christianity. As George Carey has said, Prince Charles is "a man who takes faith seriously". It is not serious to squat like a frog in one's own puddle of belief and pretend that it is the ocean of faith.

There are still Anglicans and Roman Catholics who do adopt a narrowly sectarian point of view. Fortunately, George Carey and the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume, are completely free of this fault.

In terms of their congregations, the two Churches are of approximately equal size, but are historically connected to different groups. The Church of England is what it says, a Church with a powerful national appeal, at its strongest where the English culture is most cherished. The Roman Catholic Church is much more Celtic, still with strong connections to the descendants of the Irish immigrants of the past 200 years.

The two Churches have different intellectual traditions, national status and international connections. When they work together they are much more effective than when they work separately, let alone when they are in apparent conflict.

They both have the same aim, to re-Christianise what has become a largely pagan Britain. This is not an evangelism which is hostile to other faiths; if the Dalai Lama's example suddenly inspired a million British people to convert to Tibetan Buddhism, Britain would become a more compassionate and, in some ways, a more Christian country. The culture that needs to be evangelised is the sceptical materialism of the modern world. One can apply to both Archbishops the phrase George Carey used of the Prince of Wales. They are both "serious about faith", and they are making some headway against the wind of our age.

William Rees-Mogg

Duke of Devonshire, who is probably the best-mannered man in England, is in his. The Duke of Devonshire treats everyone as his Aunt Ethel.

Just before Christmas, the Archbishop had a meeting with the Prince

and calling each other by shrill, girlish nicknames. I admit that I never meet such people; the people I do occasionally meet are old, bachelor clergymen for whom their sexuality may be a thorn in the flesh, who seem singularly devoted to the welfare of their often impoverished parishes. Even before AIDS, homosexuality involved suffering and suffering often develops the ability to sympathise with others.

George Carey's personality has a steady rather than a dramatic pulling power. He recently said: "When I actually meet politicians, the Government, the Royal Family, members of the House of Lords and so on, they are remarkably ordinary people. When you get close to them, they are the same as my Aunt Ethel."

It is his nature to deal with people without too much regard for their trappings or for his own. He is an Aunt Ethel Archbishop himself, a

Nanny state

JUST days after Jemima Goldsmith explained through the press how she intended to bring up her son as an Urdu-speaking Muslim, the strikingly beautiful daughter of billionaire Sir James Goldsmith has slipped off to Pakistan.

Jemima flew out on Saturday afternoon taking baby Sulaiman to his native country for the first time, accompanied by his new nanny, a London-based Pakistani girl in her mid-20s.



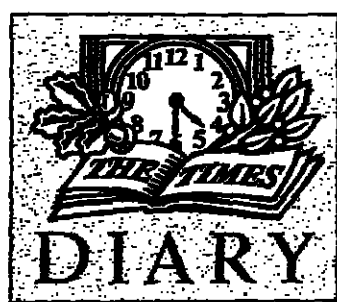
Jemima and baby: jetting out

With her mother, Lady Annabel, in Barbados and her father and the rest of the family at Sir James's hacienda in Mexico, she opted to join her husband Imran in Lahore rather than stay in London to see in the new year.

The nanny has just been appointed after an exhausting search for somebody prepared to look after Sulaiman in the run-up to the Pakistani elections in February, when both Imran and Jemima will be campaigning. She was recommended by the mother of one of Jemima's close friends and, with family in Pakistan, is happy to fit in with the household plans.

Jemima has taken quickly to motherhood, breast-feeding and changing nappies like a bustling young wet nurse. She maintains that Sulaiman has inherited Imran's looks. Although the Muslim child has no true godparents, Jemima's close friend Vicky Tompkins, the Green Shield stamps heiress, has been awarded an honorary role in that department.

President Clinton didn't hold back on Christmas Day at the White House this year, where the



menu was long on carbohydrates: turkey with white bread and corn bread stuffing, peppered ham, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, dinner rolls and a relish tray as well as cherry jello, pumpkin and lemon meringue pie and chocolate cake.

Minus gala

SEDFIELD in Co Durham will be without its MP for the new year celebrations. Tony Blair, who with Cherie traditionally enjoys a constituency singalong with pints of beer, mince pies and tags from the local Labour club, has received an alternative invitation.

Sir David Puttnam has asked the Blairs to be guests of honour at the champagne-soaked party he plans at his sizeable home in Ireland.

Sedgefield locals have taken the news with customary stoicism: "It's a real shame. A lot of people look forward to seeing them there," says Blair's agent, John Burton. "But Tony is enjoying a glittering career and with a bit of luck, this could be the last chance he gets to relax for a few years."

John Major, meanwhile, will be spending a modest New Year's Eve at Chequers with a small gathering of friends and family. He isn't planning a party — which will come as no surprise to those carping souls



"Hoping to impress Prince Charles with your muscular Christianity, Gordon?"

who maintain he can't actually manage one.

Hankies out

A VILE contagion has afflicted the Royal Shakespeare Company. The flu epidemic now gripping the country by its throat has all but seen off the RSC's Barbican production of *As You Like It*.

Friday was a night for understudies when four performers, including the impressive Joseph Fiennes, brother of Ralph, were laid low and couldn't muster an appearance on stage. After a monumental reshuffle, seven actors played different parts from those billed in the programme. Many who refused to succumb to the age, such as the company veteran John Woodvine, coughed and spluttered their way through the drama. This bug knows no theatrical boundaries — for it has spread to Stratford, where actors are dropping like ninespins.

Son down

IT'S not just teenage girls pressing flowers on Prince William who are making his life difficult. When the Prince was playing for the Eton Colts in the last match of the season



Elizabeth Hurley with her companion Henry Dent-Brocklehurst

against King's Canterbury, one of the opposition team made a bee-line for him. The heir to the throne was prostrate on the floor when the boy boldly attempted to stamp on him. Before he could lift his rugger boot, however, the tyke was hauled off and sent packing from the field of play.

Shooting star

WE CAN expect to see more of Elizabeth Hurley in Britain next year. Her close friend Henry Dent-Brocklehurst, hosting shooting parties this Christmas at his £50 million estate, Sudeley Castle

in Gloucestershire, has been telling friends that he plans to return permanently to Britain.

It was Henry who provided Liz with a shoulder to cry on after Hugh Grant was caught with a prostitute in his car off Sunset Boulevard; he has also been her companion in Los Angeles, where he runs a film company. But these crisp December mornings and high-flying birds appear to be wooing him back to Britain — and where Henry goes, you can be sure that Liz is not far behind. He has told friends that he will return to Britain this April.

P-H-S



A CHRISTMAS MYSTERY

Clinton's intentions for a second term remain elusive

our years into his presidency, and some even weeks after his re-election, Americans remain unsure about what Bill Clinton wants to achieve in his second term. Washington awaits an inaugural address next month in the hope that it will end the uncertainty. Beyond noting that his speech would be "somewhat longer" than his first such delivery (words that will instil fear among those attending the ceremony), Mr Clinton seems content to bide his time and keep his own counsel.

The President could continue with the populist strategy that served him so well on the campaign trail. Thus he would concentrate on the ceremonial and symbolic aspects of his post, placing his political energy on sustaining economic growth and capturing the credit for it. At home he would adopt an essentially responsive position. He would allow the Republican Congress to formulate most domestic legislation — which he could then veto or not largely on the basis of public opinion polls. In foreign affairs, he would remain cautious in his personal engagement, keeping the promotion of American trade and the minimisation of military risks as his watchwords.

That was an enticing formula for candidate Clinton. But deprived of any future rendezvous with the American electorate, it may not be enough. Instead there is his place in history to be contemplated. He is a keen consumer of political biographies. So it is difficult to imagine this son of Oxford and Yale being without interest in what others have to say about him. As he will be just 54 when placed in enforced retirement, he will have to listen to it for years to come.

He might then adopt a more ambitious agenda. An obvious one exists if he is minded to co-operate with Republicans on Capitol Hill. He could enter serious negotiations to balance the budget. In so doing he could promote serious reforms of the

publicly funded healthcare system — Medicare and Medicaid — which will otherwise soon run into severe financial difficulties. He could start the process of reinventing the social security programme which faces a demographic crisis when baby-boomers such as Mr Clinton start claiming their pensions. He could seek the title of "the Great Fixer": a President not much loved but highly effective.

However attractive such a scenario might seem, it would involve concessions to Speaker, Newt Gingrich, and the Senate majority leader, Trent Lott. It would be attacked by the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Mr Clinton might feel safer accepting the traditional path taken by many of his predecessors: that of embracing international affairs and the role of statesman and peacemaker. That would necessitate a major shift in White House priorities. This may prove too taxing for a man who has been so committed to the detail of domestic policy. The world is not currently overburdened with conflicts that can be mitigated by presidential fiat.

So far Mr Clinton has given little indication of his planning. Nor have his recent appointments offered many clues. The selection of Erskine Bowles, a distinctly centrist figure, as White House Chief of Staff may appeal to Republicans. Alternatively, the elevation of Madeleine Albright might make more sense if the President intended to become more active in overseas affairs. The obvious influence and interests of Vice-President Al Gore could make the quest for popularity an all-pervasive factor. Quite possibly the President himself has not decided yet.

The United States and the wider world must hope that history weighs heavily on the President's mind. Four years of partisan gridlock and government by Gallup would do little for public policy.

CHARLES AND HIS CHURCH

Anglicans will welcome an involved but sensitive Prince

The Church of England has always been a delicate if surprisingly robust institution. It seeks to offer answers of reasonable clarity to fundamental questions while encouraging tolerance and diversity. That balancing act repeats itself in the fragile relationship between Crown and Canterbury, Crown and Church, Crown and congregation.

The monarch is expected to be Supreme Governor, but not governor: defender of the faith but not designer of it. It is little wonder that most occupants of the throne have found those aspects of constitutional monarchy that touch upon the political sphere easier in practice than those which encroach on matters spiritual.

The Prince of Wales has apparently decided to devote a larger proportion of his time to the Church of England. He has also signalled his frustration with recent reforms he believes have been driven through by "pathetic politically correct progressives". One immediate aspect of that additional energy is his enthusiasm for the proposed millennium village: a £123million proposal that would combine a 10,000-seat "super church" with a huge hostel designed to provide inexpensive accommodation for young people visiting London. To proceed, this project would require £50million in lottery funding.

This concentration on Anglicanism comes after a decade in which the Prince has displayed a broad and intense interest in spiritual issues. He has also taken particular care to familiarise himself with the worlds of Buddhism, Hinduism and Muslims. To his enormous annoyance, to which he is entitled, such activities have seen him stigmatised as some sort of New Age mystic,

adopting theological thinking on an *à la carte* basis. This is a particular irony, given the rather traditionalist opinions he has expressed on liturgical questions.

In this new approach he would be wise to proceed gently and with some caution. His views will be scrutinised with special vigour by liberals, evangelicals and conservatives alike. It may indeed be the case that politically correct progressives exercise undue influence. If so that has been as much the fault of inactivity and indulgence among those who preferred the pre-existing faith as any conscious coup hatched by determined radicals. To describe all contemporary change within the Church, especially the introduction of women priests, as proceeding from trendy notions would be as harsh a misinterpretation as that from which the Prince suspects he himself has suffered.

Similarly, there will be heated debate about the millennium village. That concept proceeds from a thoroughly justified concern about the secular character of most celebrations planned so far for the turn of the century. The idea is bold and imaginative, but some will ask whether, in principle, Anglicans should accept lottery financing for their activities.

Most Anglicans will welcome greater involvement from Prince Charles. Given the formidable force he has offered to other causes that have captured his attention, the Church of England, which requires rather more love from rather more quarters than just St James's Palace, can only benefit from a more involved Prince. To maximise his influence he will need sensitivity. He should speak softly and not carry a big stick.

A GOOD SHELF-LIFE

One hundred and fifty years ago: a vintage year for the novel

The year 1847 was an *annus mirabilis* for the English novel. Becky Sharp was making her unscrupulous way up through the rich strata of early 19th-century society in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. In Dickens's new novel, *Dombey and Son*, the crusty head of a shipping house mourned the death of his little boy along with the whole nation.

On top of that, it was the year when all the three Brontë sisters launched themselves on the world as novelists — even though they were then still half-disguised as Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* bowled its readers over at once by giving sensible, adult conversations between women and men; a few chucking voices suggested it was not fit for young ladies. Emily's *Wuthering Heights* knocked its readers out just as successfully: reviewers merely wrung their hands over its morbidity. Anne's story of the trials of a governess, *Agnes Grey*, quietly established itself.

Meanwhile Disraeli brought out the third book in his political trilogy, *Tancred*. Its story of a young man who abandons White's Club to go to Jerusalem and find a faith for himself was topical in a year when battle was being waged over whether a Jewish Member should sit in Parliament.

These six novels would have made a stunning shortlist for the 1947 Booker Prize. They would have led to some unholy rows. The proto-feminists on the jury would have quarrelled among themselves over the three Brontë girls. Gladstone — although he could

not bear Disraeli — would have given his vote to *Tancred*, since he was busy that year outraging voters in his Oxford constituency by supporting the Jewish Member. In the end, it would have been a choice between Dickens and Thackeray, the hearts rooting for *Dombey* and the heads prevailing.

Who among our own recent novelists will still be as much read as all these novels are now, in another 150 years? The question will not arise, since communication by then will probably be conducted entirely through the new medium of Europe. But if the written English language survives, there are a few candidates for that posterity.

Evelyn Waugh's *Sword of Honour* trilogy and Anthony Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time* have already shown a good deal of staying power and both have the historical scope of the great Victorian novels. The extraordinary rural romances of Iris Murdoch could go on haunting later generations. Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities* tackles the life of New York with the panache and power of *Vanity Fair* — and perhaps deliberately makes that claim in its title.

Whatever future readers may think, readers today still long for novels such as those that erupted 150 years ago. All those six are still in print and selling briskly (well, perhaps *Tancred* is flagging). We could apply to them something Tennyson wrote in *The Princess* — also published in that amazing year 1847 — "How sad, how fresh, the days that are no more".

Justice done and seen to be done

From Sir Ludovic Kennedy

Sir, Mr Justice Latham is to be congratulated on his ruling ("Judge backs prisoners over interviews with media", December 20) that lay people seeking to correct alleged miscarriages of justice should be permitted to interview claimants in prison in addition to corresponding with them.

In the several cases, bar one, which I once investigated I would not have felt competent to pursue any without having first made sure that the claimants were available to speak to me in person. The exception was Timothy Evans who, having been hanged in error over the *Rillington Place* murders, is no longer available.

In correspondence only, however persuasive the documentation, one can never be certain that the claimant is telling the truth. In a personal interview there is a far better chance. Guilty men, I have found, are inclined to assert innocence with a show of outrage. The innocent, on the other hand, tend quietly to assume it.

The guilty, too, shy away from discussing the evidence, while for the truly innocent it is the detailed evidence, given and suppressed, which is at the heart of their case.

When I asked one claimant if he was willing for me to look into his case, even if my findings were not in his favour, he agreed unhesitatingly. The guilty are apt not to agree or else do so hesitantly.

Incidentally, I was astonished to see that the published list of 14 members of the new Criminal Cases Review Commission, given in a parliamentary written answer by the Home Secretary on December 18 (details, early editions, December 20), does not contain a single lay campaigner in this field (eg. Chris Mullin, MP, David Jessel, Bob Woffinden, the journalist named in your December 20 report, Robert Kee and Paul Foot), with a proven record of success.

Yours etc,
LUDOVIC KENNEDY,
Ashbury, Wiltshire,
December 27.

View on compensation

From Mr Frank Metcalfe

Sir, Once more an ex-prisoner of war of the Japanese pleads (letter, December 17) for further compensation for hardships suffered there (report, December 5).

Nowadays compensation has become all the rage. We have policemen in Liverpool securing compensation for doing their duty at a football tragedy (report, June 4), a murderer seeking compensation for inadequate medical support (report, December 13) and heaven knows how many more claims in the pipeline.

Whatever happened to British manhood? It wasn't exactly a picnic to be wounded, wet and sick in a dinghy in the North Sea (November 1940) after an interrupted bombing raid on Germany, followed by many months in hospital having my face rebuilt, but I'd have been ashamed to seek money for protecting my country or doing my duty.

I think, too, of my many colleagues who didn't have the luck I had. What of their compensation?

Yours truly,
FRANK METCALFE,
3 Blacksmiths Lane,
St Michael's, St Albans,
Hertfordshire,
December 20.

Fathers who smoke

From Lord Kilbracken

Sir, You report (December 17) that one in seven of all childhood cancers may have been caused by fathers who were smokers prior to conception. This figure was calculated by analysing statistics for three years in the Fifties, when you show a total of 1,952 such deaths, an average of 651 a year, of which 93 would therefore be attributable to smoking fathers.

In the relevant period there were some 800,000 live births a year, and over two thirds of male adults were smokers. It therefore follows that their habit may have been responsible for the death of one in every 3,400, at least, of their offspring, or 0.018 per cent.

This may be of reassurance to smoking fathers such as myself who have young children.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN KILBRACKEN,
House of Lords,
December 19.

Quota hopping

From Mr Francis Deutsch

Sir, With reference to your report on fish quotas (December 21), a boat owner freely sells his licence. He uses a broker who has access to all relevant information. The buyer freely buys on the same basis. His catch is then limited by the same law, although he may be a Dutch or Spanish citizen. It is an open and perfect market.

Our Government and its more right-wing followers believe in the wisdom of the market. What, then, is the rationale for their objection to quota hopping?

Yours faithfully,
F. DEUTSCH,
14 West View, NW4,
December 26.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

The place for Catholic schools within modern morality

From Sir David Goodall

Sir, In his sympathetic piece today, "Religious schools against the world", William Rees-Mogg draws a critical dividing line between schools that teach a morality based on religious belief and those that do not.

The problem is that a morality derived from religious belief carries no conviction unless that religious belief is perceived as central to the lives of those who teach it. There is therefore an equally critical dividing line between schools which are based on a community of living faith and schools where religious belief and practice are in effect optional extras to be left largely to the chaplain.

In Britain, today, the believing Christian is a deviant in a society where the Christian world-view — and a fortiori the Roman Catholic world-view — is regarded as quaint, if not actually perverse: liberal agnosticism is the norm. And since there is a social dimension to belief, what we find credible depends as much on whether the majority of people with whom we live take it seriously as on whether it is true. Humanly speaking, a Christian world-view loses its plausibility, even for the believer, unless it is fully shared and lived by people whose intellectual capacity commands respect and whose Christian lifestyle carries conviction.

For the Christian or Catholic parent, the true value of a monastic school is that it is centred on a community which meets that requirement in a way which is becoming almost unique. Whatever its other advantages, I doubt whether Eton would wish to make the same claim.

Yours etc,
DAVID GOODALL,
Greystones, Ampleforth, York,
December 23.

From the Headmaster of
Prior Park College

Sir, A fundamental purpose of a Catholic independent school, such as this one, is to attract those Catholic parents who are considering the independent sector of education for their children and then to persuade them, by what the school offers, to apply for places.

This task is not made easier by the provision of Catholic chaplains in Anglican schools. The "league table mentality" and a wish by certain Catholic

families to be accepted by the "Establishment" — reasons suggested in your report (December 21) — might also play a part in some cases. However, in over 11 years of headship of Catholic independent schools, my overwhelming impression is that parental choices are usually based on more sensible and discerning criteria.

Parents are interested in the religious teaching, spiritual life and moral values of a Catholic school and want to assess how well these are lived out in the school community. Also, they want to exercise their right to scrutinise teaching standards, facilities and results (of which league tables are one of the helpful indications). Usually they have to think their way through complex and competing considerations to arrive at a decision which they hope will serve the needs of all the family members.

Coeducation might, therefore, be preferred to single-sex schooling so that, in severely busy lives, precious holiday time and school visits can be the same for sons and daughters. The distance and time taken from home to school are almost always crucial, as is cost, and so the question of day or boarding (weekly or full boarding) comes into focus. Furthermore, it is increasingly less common for both parents to be Catholic.

Despite all these factors, there is still, in most areas, a sufficient variety of vigorous and very attractive Catholic independent schools to meet the majority of parents' needs and aspirations.

Yours faithfully,
GILES MERCER,
Prior Park College, Bath,
December 21.

From Mr John Mills

Sir, William Rees-Mogg makes a good case, but missed one obvious and simple point: access.

For us to have sent our son to Ampleforth would make it hard for us to see him from term to term. The driving time from Berkshire to North Yorkshire is up to six hours — a pilgrimage by anyone's standards. House plays, school matches, those impromptu visits that maintain contact and continuity with your child and the school, would be lost.

Much more important for us, as a practising Catholic family with a son at Eton, is the opportunity to take him with us to Mass every Sunday. In this

Britain's diverse faiths

From Mr Karim Chowdhury

Sir, I heartily congratulate Mr Israr Khan on speaking out and reminding the Muslim children at the school where he teaches whom they worship (report, December 19). To a secular society it may not matter what people do as part of their faith, as all faiths to these secularists hold no truth. However, with us Muslims, following the truth is the primary essence of our faith and any contamination is strongly shunned.

Thus, we are unapologetically very obstinate in following Islam, and no matter how emotional and nostalgic this Pagan/Christian festival of Christmas may be to some, to Muslims it is a continuation of practices of falsehood and lies.

I disagree with the Provost of Birmingham, the Very Reverend Peter Berry that we live in a "Christian country" (early editions, December 19); rather we live in a democratic country, and tolerance does not imply sharing religious practices of other

faiths but respecting the rights of others to practise their ways whether we think these practices are true or not.

Yours sincerely,
KARIM CHOWDHURY,
64 Warren Street, W1,
December 19.

'Forced' Caesarians

From Professor G. M. Stirrat

Sir, I challenge the anecdotal assertion made by Ms Beverley Beach (letter, December 23) that recent "forced" Caesarean section cases have changed attitudes to consent.

The matter was discussed at a recent meeting in this hospital. The six consultants present have a cumulative experience of almost 150 years in the specialty throughout Britain. Not one of us had ever experienced a situation in which any suggested care policy was "enforced" contrary to the woman's wishes.

What is more, no such situation has arisen in the 25 years since this maternity hospital opened, during which over 100,000 women have been cared for. We suggest that this is likely to be the experience of the vast majority of our midwifery and obstetric colleagues in the UK.

It is vital that midwives, general practitioners and obstetricians work together with the mother to determine what is in the best interests of herself and her baby. We trust that we will never find ourselves faced with the need to approach a court of law on a matter of clinical care.

Yours sincerely,
GORDON M. STIRRAT,
University of Bristol,
Department of
Obstetrics and Gynaecology,
St Michael's Hospital, Bristol,
December 26.

From Mr Brian Parker

Sir, I cannot understand why it might be considered entirely proper for me to express opinions on ballet, opera and the arts, for example, on emotional grounds, thereby possibly affecting the livelihood and wellbeing of many in those fields, but were I to do so on the matter of handgun legislation, I would be censured.

Surely, emotion has legitimacy in most issues, including this one. What matters is not whether opinions are emotional or rational, but that decisions based upon them stand the test of time.

Yours sincerely,
B. H. PARKER,
Rook House,
Victoria Road, Dartmouth, Devon,
December 20.

Letters that are intended
for publication should carry a
daytime telephone number. They
may be sent to a fax number —
0171-782 5046.

he sees our enthusiasm and commitment to our faith, thus fulfilling the old adage: "The family that prays together, stays together."

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MILLS,
The Old Barn,
Rectory Road, Stratley, Berkshire,
December 24.

From Dr Keith Amery

Sir, It seems that some sections of the Catholic Church are dismayed at the support among wealthy Catholics for secular education in the independent sector. Some of us, however, consider it to be a healthy sign now that both Catholic and non-Catholic schools have a more mixed intake.

To suggest that a Catholic education, by virtue of being Catholic, is morally superior to a secular one is nonsense. Surely it all depends upon the school. Few parents are prepared to part with over £12,000 a year for moral fibre and an affected accent.

Parents rightly put a sound education first. Without this, the next generation will not be able to afford the fees for their own children.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH AMERY,
Dean House, Wyddial,
Buntingford, Hertfordshire,
December 22.

From Mr Alan Finlay

Sir, I believe that most rather than merely "some" parents send their children to public schools like Eton not out of concern for their eternal souls but in an attempt to buy them a privileged position in society — "networking", as William Rees-Mogg calls it.

For the rest of the population who, unlike Lord Rees-Mogg and his friends, cannot send their children to either Eton or Ampleforth, the state-funded and regulated education system must be improved, not through the illogicalities of fundamentalist religious instruction but through the teaching of basic human values which transcend religious folklore: respect for the family and each other, rather than the greedy self-interest that is manifest throughout British society.

Yours sincerely,
ALAN FINLAY,
23 Foscore Road, NW4,
December 24.

Lessons of history

From Dr Olga Ashby

Sir, I am a citizen of the former USSR, educated in Kishinev and Moscow during the 1980s, who has lived in England for the past two years. I am currently midway through a GCSE course in English language/literature for which one of our topics of study is Tennyson's poem *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

In that poem it is said that the battle was lost for the British solely because of gross blunders made by their commanding officers. In contrast, we were taught that the battle represented a triumph of Russian strategy, much as Agincourt is regarded by the English.

Further, during our discussions on the poem the "original" nurse, Florence Nightingale, was mentioned. At my school we were told stories of another "original" nurse, who tended the Russian wounded of the Crimean War — Dasha Sevastopolskaya.

These two small items illustrate the subtlety of the cultural divide between the two sides of the former Iron Curtain — we were facing in opposite directions for sixty years. We should bear these perceptual differences in mind as we try to cancel the years of mutual isolation and attempt to live as partners in the new greater Europe.

Sincerely,
OLGA ASHBY,
35 Bath Street, Leek, Staffordshire,
December 26.

Fully furnished

From Mrs Mair Edwards, JP

Sir, I recently received a letter addressed to the Chair of the Bench (letters, December 18, 23). It made me wonder whether I was being cut down to size.

Yours truly,
M. E. EDWARDS,
Cae Halen Mawr,
Llandwrog, Caernarfon, Gwynedd,
December 27.

From Mr Ian G. Sampson

Sir, The meetings I used to find most difficult to conduct were those held, according to the minute-taker, "under the chair of Mr Sampson".

Yours faithfully,
IAN SAMPSON,
10 Crossway,
Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.

From Mr Rupert Steele

Sir, Your correspondence about the control of meetings by furniture reminds me of a colleague's story of an "old Labour" meeting which collapsed on points of order.

Rather more graphically than he perhaps intended, the minute-taker recorded that "The Platform did not support the Chair, and the Floor did not support the Platform."

Yours faithfully,
R. P. STEELE,
40 Elliott Road, Chiswick, W4,
December 27.

OBITUARIES

SIR ROBERT DOUGLAS

Sir Robert Douglas, OBE, President of Tilbury Douglas, died at his home, Dunston Hall, Staffordshire, on December 7 aged 97. He was born at Breconshire, Dumfriesshire, on February 2, 1899.

In a life devoted to the construction industry, Robert Douglas founded and developed a firm that built factories for wartime aircraft production, airfields for American bombers, steel-works in the immediate post-war period; sections of Britain's motorway network in the 1950s and 1960s and the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham in the 1970s. From small beginnings he created a construction company which had a reputation at home and abroad.

His father died early in Robert McCallum Douglas's life and his doughty Presbyterian mother brought up a family of four children in a farming community. He served in the First World War in the Highland Light Infantry and the Cameronian Regiment. Wounded in France, he was invalided home to Scotland before returning to the Western Front in the last months of the war.

When it was over he had two years' legal training with a Dumfriesshire solicitor. In 1921, a Scottish contractor, Andrew Blair, wished to establish a civil engineering contracting company in Birmingham and was seeking a company secretary. Douglas was appointed to this post and helped Blair to set up and run his business. It was soon discovered that he had an aptitude for civil engineering estimating and since Blair, Lyle & Co was a small undertaking, he became involved in site supervision.

When Blair fell ill, Douglas left the business and founded a public works company during the depths of a severe recession. From an initial capital of £3,000, the business developed into a group of more than 30 companies with operations throughout the UK and overseas.

Douglas was one of the first to recognise that the future of the construction industry lay in mechanisation, and Robert M. Douglas (Contractors) always invested in construction plant on a scale comparable to



that of much larger firms. As the Second World War loomed, the company undertook the civil engineering work for an aircraft "shadow" factory (a number of which were set up at the insistence of Lord Beaverbrook to maximise aircraft production for war needs) for the Austin Motor Company at Longbridge, Birmingham, and subsequently for the Nuffield organisation at Castle Bromwich.

Later in the war, with American strategic bomber forces operating from Britain Douglas's firm completed contracts for the construction of

airfields for the USAAF in the East Midlands at very short notice. Because of the break-neck speed at which this work had to be done, many of these began without a single drawing, contract clause, or even a specification; but Robert Douglas was known to be a contractor of such integrity that the Government could start spending money with his firm without the fear of being cheated.

In the years of the construction boom after the Second World War, the company built two tinsplate works in South Wales at Trostre and Velindre, which were the largest in

Europe at the time. Those years also saw the beginning of the motorway programme and Douglas's firm completed sections of the M1, M4, M40, M42, M50 and M54.

In 1953 the company was floated and Robert Douglas used his capital, derived from the flotation, to purchase the Dunston estate, near Burton upon Trent, which belonged to the Hardy family at that time. He assumed the role of village squire and carried out major alterations to the various properties in Dunston for the benefit of the people living there.

In 1956 he was appointed

OBE in recognition of his contribution to the control of the construction industry during the war years, through his membership of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works Midland Regional Joint Advisory Committee. In 1976 he was knighted for services to export following the award to Rapid Metal Developments, a company in the Douglas Group, of the Queen's Award for Industry for Export, and the completion of the National Exhibition Centre in that year. The company also built the Birmingham Arena, the International Convention Centre, and the Birmingham Symphony Hall.

Douglas established construction companies overseas: in the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and subsidiaries of the construction equipment division in Australia, New Zealand, France, Spain, Ireland, and more recently, Malaysia, Thailand, Korea, and Taiwan.

He became president of the Staffordshire Agricultural Society in 1979 and his ability as a contractor was particularly useful to it when its main exhibition hall burnt down in the year of his presidency. Even though he was 80, he was at the showground by 7am the following day to instruct on clearance operations and to advise on its speedy reconstruction.

He was awarded an honorary doctorate of science by the University of Aston in Birmingham in 1977. The company had, for many years, been closely associated with the university, providing on-the-job training for civil engineering and other students. Douglas was chairman of Burton Graduate Medical Centre from 1969 to 1981, overseeing the fundraising necessary for its completion in 1972. He also provided finance to help the centre to buy computerised equipment.

The company he founded became known as the Douglas Group and grew worldwide, surviving the cycles of boom and recession so characteristic of the vulnerable construction industry. In October 1991, a merger was arranged with the Tilbury Group and Douglas became president of the new combined organisation.

In 1927 he married Millicent Irene Tomkys Morgan. She died in 1980; he is survived by a son and a daughter.

INFANTA MARÍA CRISTINA DE BORBÓN Y BATTENBERG

The Infanta María Cristina de Borbón y Battenberg died in Madrid on December 23 aged 88. She was born on December 12, 1911.

A WOMAN richly endowed with poise of bearing, with handsome features and an imperious build, the Infanta María Cristina de Borbón y Battenberg was a living bridge to another, older age. Yet she was blessed with a sunny disposition which enabled her to surmount the misfortunes which overtook her family in the early part of her life, and she was able to adapt to family life in another country, once it became clear that life for her and her family would no longer be tenable in her own.

The great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria, she was the fourth issue of King Alfonso XIII of Spain and Queen Victoria Eugenia. The aunt of the present Spanish King, Juan Carlos, she was the younger sister of his father, Don Juan, Count of Barcelona, a man who was never to sit on the throne to which he was heir.

Tumultuous political events in Spain early in the life of the young Infanta sent her, along with the rest of her family, into exile in Italy. The proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic on April 14, 1931, led her father, King Alfonso, to believe that a departure from his kingdom was the most prudent course to take for the safety of his family.

Sections within the Republican alliance, fuelled by such publications as *Alfonso XIII Unmasked*, by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, had made of him a boogymen for what was regarded by his political enemies as a corrupt system, and the King was anxious to avoid an outbreak of bloodshed among his subjects.

Aged only 20, María Cristina began life afresh in a new, but not inhospitable, land. She was a considerable beauty, and seldom failed to cause a stir at social gatherings with her fair hair, stylishly worn, her limpid blue eyes, and her vivacious conversation. Nine years later, at 29, she married Enrique Eugenio Marone Cinzano, the Count of Marone, whose family owned the Cinzano distilleries.

While the Spanish Royal



Family continued to live in Rome, the Infanta moved to her matrimonial home in Turin. The marriage, always comfortable, was to last for 28 years. In 1968, the Count succumbed to an inflammation of some serious injuries he had sustained while on safari in Mozambique some years earlier.

Four daughters were, however, born to the couple, and María Cristina always took pride in the fact that they were equally at home in Italy and in Spain. Her pride, of course, always lay firmly embedded in her limitless discretion. It was under her influence, for example, that her husband refused the title of "Duke" offered to him by the Italian

Royal Household, on the ground that the title of "Count" was more "circumspect". In such matters she was seldom wrong.

María Cristina devoted her life to a variety of charitable works, and she was particularly tireless in her contributions to associations for the support of cancer research. Two days before Christmas, however, on the occasion of the birthday of the Countess of Barcelona — her brother Don Juan's wife — she died in Madrid of a heart attack, but was buried at her husband's family crypt in Turin, with the entire Spanish Royal Family in attendance.

She is survived by her four daughters.

FRANÇOIS NECKAR

François Neckar, couturier, died on December 6 aged 92. He was born on November 24, 1904.

FOR MORE than 30 years François Neckar distinguished himself as a couturier and fashion designer in Sloane Street. His client list, it was said, read like the pages of *Debut*. He was one of the last of the grand couturiers from the world of French haute couture. Almost certainly he was the only one who could design, cut, make and finish any of the garments created for his clientele.

This creative flair and technical talent stemmed from his early grounding in the great French fashion houses whose demands for the highest level of quality nurtured the perfectionist spirit of the François Neckar salon.

Born in a remote village in southern Bohemia, François Neckar was apprenticed in the neighbouring town of Straz na Nezarke in an uncle's tailoring business. From there he went on to work in Prague.

In 1928 he moved to Paris where the reputation of Czech tailors was highly prized. Neckar's flair for design and his exceptional practical ability made him much sought after in the flourishing Paris couture houses of that time.

He worked for several houses including Creed and

Rochas until 1935, when Madame Schiaparelli offered him the position of cutter in her London salon. He accepted this assignment and worked successfully for some of the most internationally exotic names among Schiaparelli's clientele. His calm professionalism was in sharp contrast to that of many of the film industry and society glitterati whom he dressed. He later worked at Eva Luyten's Salon and at Strassers in Grosvenor Square.

The House of François Neckar in Sloane Street was established in 1950. The reputation of Neckar's quiet genius spread rapidly. He maintained a relatively small workshop but generated a prodigious output from his own punishing work schedule. He was greatly assisted in the business by his wife, who, among many other tasks she took on, coped with the administrative duties which were not his favourite.

The house of Neckar ac-

quired an enviable clientele. His skill and talent was in introducing his own individuality while interpreting the Paris fashion which he loved. He could enhance and flatter any client with his classical approach to design.

His interest in the world of fashion never waned though in later years he spent more time in organising his beautiful garden at his home in Ruislip. He leaves his widow, Heloise, two sons and two daughters.



Neckar (seated) with Elsa Schiaparelli and members of the family

COST OF CATTLE DISEASE
£224,000 COMPENSATION
TO FARMERS
OVER 30,000 ANIMALS
SLAUGHTERED

Since the present severe visitation of foot-and-mouth disease began to afflict the English countryside in the middle of October more than 30,000 head of live-stock have been slaughtered, and the compensation payable by the Ministry of Agriculture to farmers for their losses so far amounts to about £224,000. But the policy of relentlessly stamping out the disease wherever it appears has prevented an infection of a particularly virulent type from running riot among the country's livestock, and it now appears reasonable to hope that the worst of the scourge is past. Much will depend on a continuance of the admirable co-operation of farmers in promptly notifying any suspected cases. The present series of outbreaks began in Norfolk on October 16, and since then 153 have occurred. Excepting small outbreaks in Northumberland and Cheshire, the disease has been substantially confined to the eastern and southern counties. An area of infection at Devizes is now causing some concern, but apart from this there are signs

ON THIS DAY

December 30, 1937

The burning carcasses of slaughtered cattle lighting up the night sky of East Anglia was a sight that neither their former owners nor passers-by were likely ever to forget

that the incidence of the disease is abating. Up to date there have been slaughtered 8,651 cattle, 15,144 sheep, and 6,537 pigs. Serious as the outbreak is it does not compare with the experience of 1923, when the animals slaughtered included 69,256 cattle, 26,170 sheep, and 33,304 pigs and the compensation paid to farmers amounted to £1,898,211. The individual farmer who sees the carcasses of his slaughtered cattle going up in smoke may find it hard to realize that the policy of slaughter and compensation is best, but in the light of existing knowledge this undoubtedly is so. The drastic methods adopted here keep the bulk of the country's livestock free from

infection. In Continental countries where foot-and-mouth disease is now raging, and where animals are not slaughtered, the separate outbreaks are numbered not in hundreds but in scores of thousands and the economic loss to those countries is incalculable. In France, for instance, there were about 80,000 outbreaks between July and the middle of November, and no compensation is payable there to the farmer who suffers loss through the death or the inevitable decline in value of stock affected. The expert advisers of the Ministry of Agriculture believe that there is overwhelming evidence that foot-and-mouth disease was introduced here in the autumn from the Continent by migratory birds, principally starlings. The outbreaks began when the mass migrations were at their height, and the type of infection, the areas affected, and the way in which the disease spread leave little doubt that it was carried by birds. When the first outbreaks were confirmed in Norfolk farmers spoke of having seen their fields infested a few days before by starlings. The recent spread of the infection to Wiltshire is believed to be due to migratory birds having resorted to animal feedings-troughs. The theory that the disease is imported by birds is now being made the subject of further research.

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NEWS

Saudis leak murder case evidence

Saudi newspapers revealed apparently damning evidence against two British nurses accused of murdering a hospital colleague, including separate confessions and graphic details of how they allegedly tried to cover up their part in the killing.

Western diplomats were surprised at what they describe as the unprecedented leaks in the case against Lucille McLaughlin and Deborah Parry, which they believe must have been sanctioned by the authorities in an effort to defend Saudi Arabia's much criticised legal system. Page 1

Couple die trying to rescue dog

A couple died after falling through ice in an Essex country park as they tried to save their Labrador. Another man who went to their aid also became trapped and had to be rescued by a park ranger. The dog struggled free on its own. Page 1

Solicitors sued

Sixty-five solicitors' firms are being sued over mortgage losses in an action that could change the system whereby one lawyer acts for both borrower and lender in conveyancing deals. Page 1

Abortion campaign

A senior Labour spokesman says that the party's MPs are threatening to field up to 50 candidates in the general election. Page 2

Downey's delay

The report on the Commons "cash for questions" inquiry may not be published until a few weeks before the election. Sir Gordon Downey has not yet interviewed any of the main witnesses. Page 2

Joking apart

Alan Ayckbourn and Scarborough have fallen out after a 40-year relationship. Page 3

Bombing fears

Changes to the Provisional IRA's army council have added to fears that a mainland bombing campaign is imminent. Security and intelligence officials were surprised that there was no attack before Christmas. Page 4

Royal exhibition

An Oriental manuscript presented to George III in 1797 is to go on public display for the first time in the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace. Page 5

Three-way chess hits the boards

Snowbound in Scotland with two companions and only a chess set for amusement, Khia Rasmussen set about inventing a version of the game that could be played by three. Eleven years later, he has come up with a board with 96 squares, pieces in black, white and red, and a game that is said to be more exciting and less likely to end in stalemate. Page 3

Double death

A businessman who committed suicide after burning down his house may have incinerated his wife's body. Derek Levan, whose wife was terminally ill, shot himself in front of policemen who tried to persuade him not to kill himself. The house was destroyed nine hours earlier. Page 6

'Pot' ban stays

President Clinton has approved a plan to threaten doctors with prosecution if they prescribe marijuana for seriously ill patients in Arizona and California. Both states back such use of the drug. Page 7

Civil peace

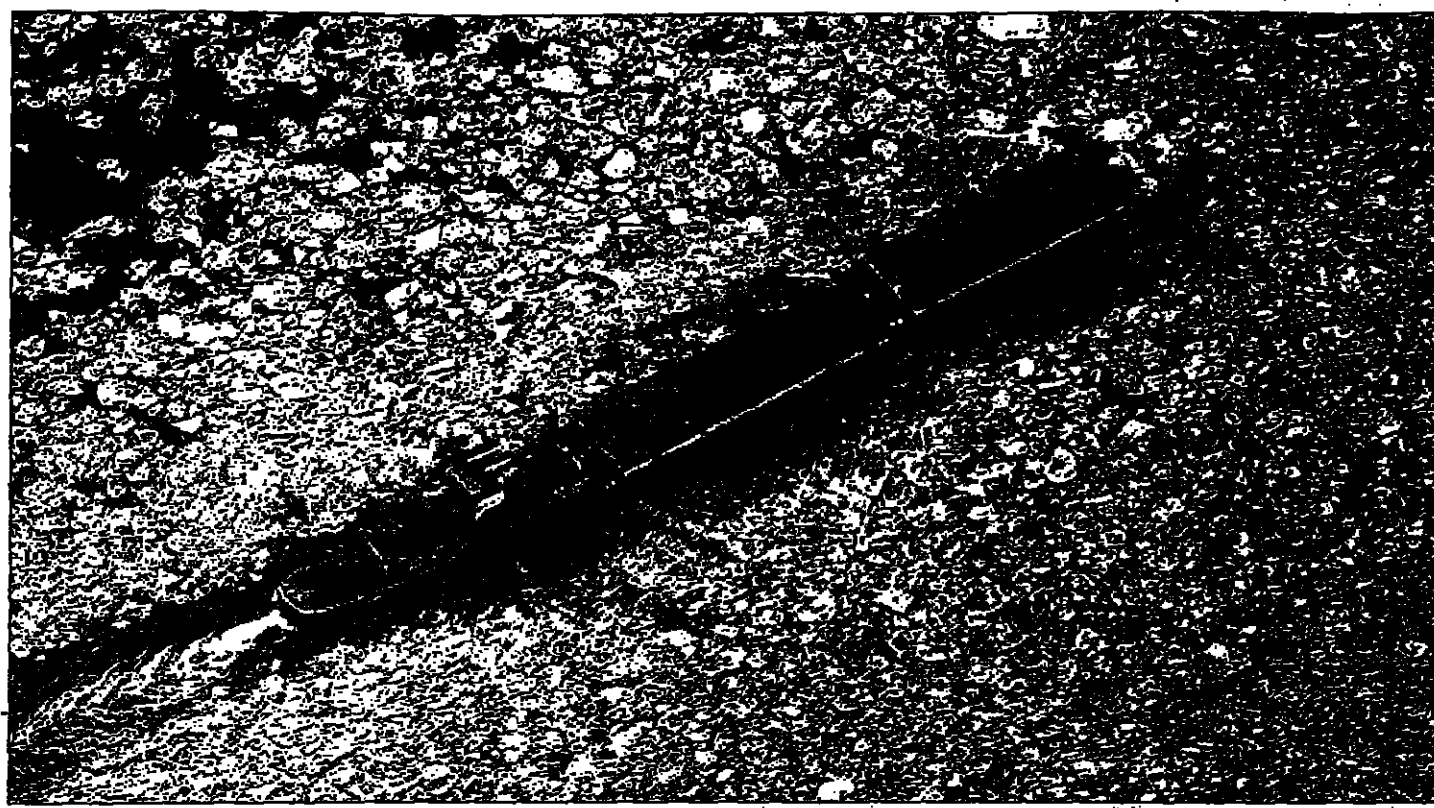
The longest-running civil war in the Western hemisphere came to a halt when Guatemala's left-wing guerrilla leaders signed an accord for a "firm and lasting peace" with President Arzú. Page 7

Moscow retreat

Two years after Moscow embarked on its bloodiest and most disastrous military campaign in half a century, the last Russian combat troops withdrew from Chechnya, in effect ceding control of the republic to the rebel Government. Page 8

Hebron pledge

Benjamin Netanyahu insisted that Israel would never pull out of Hebron as some of his ministers resisted plans to redeploy the troops there. Page 9



A cargo ship battles through the ice on Norderelbe near Hamburg, where heavy frost brought shipping almost to a standstill

BUSINESS

Jobs: Britain's job prospects stand at a seven-year high, according to employment forecasts. Page 36

Holidays: The TUC believes that six million workers will lose holidays if Britain opts out of Europe's 48-hour week. Page 36

Good to talk: BT is to spend tens of millions of pounds tackling the alleged inability of British people to hold proper conversations. The campaign is likely to be criticised by customers arguing that the money would be better used cutting the cost of telephone calls. Page 36

Making a date: Mercury Communications could face an £80 million bill to update its computers for the new millennium, as a result of its rush to enter the market in the Eighties. Page 36

Happy New Year: Next year marks the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh's golden wedding, the Tate Gallery's centenary, the 70th anniversary of William Wallace's defeat of the English at Stirling Bridge and 50 years of independence for India and Pakistan. Jack Lonsdale highlights the arrivals, departures and significant events of the year. Page 11

Twists and turns: A chance encounter with a 19th-century treatise on headaches led Oliver Sacks to draw surprising conclusions. Page 10

Slow-witted: Even a flash of inspiration moves through the brain at tortoise speed, Danish researchers have discovered. Page 10

Monster revival: She wrote it 180 years ago, yet modern science has resurrected Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in a way she could never have anticipated. Page 12

Money no object: The world's most expensive building is set to open in Tokyo next month, a high-tech marvel of architecture with a £1 billion price tag. Page 12

Top billing: Ash's biggest headline gig to date — and their first since returning from their lengthy American sojourn — thrills fans in Dublin. Page 12

Play house: If These Walls Could Speak looks at buildings that have a special artistic resonance. The series begins with Benedict Nightingale's fond memories of the Old Vic. Page 13

IN THE TIMES

THEATRE GHOSTS
Day Two of our series, *If These Walls Could Speak*, journeys to Drottningholm

LAW
David Pannick, QC, on a year when many of the rich and powerful stumbled and fell



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Sun and Moon

Sun rises: 8:05 am Sun sets: 4:00 pm
Moon sets: 10:30 am Moon rises: 10:07 pm
New moon January 9
London 4:00 pm to 8:05 am
Bristol 4:10 pm to 8:16 am
Edinburgh 5:17 pm to 9:44 am
Manchester 5:58 pm to 9:25 am
Perthshire 4:29 pm to 8:21 am

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General: In England and Wales it will feel very cold in the fresh or strong northerly winds. More than inch of snow is likely in some places the South East. Elsewhere, the sleet or snow showers are expected only to give small amounts. It will be mainly cloudy. Eastern Scotland will be cloudy with wintry showers, mainly over the Borders. Further west and in Northern Ireland, mainly dry with some sunshines.

London, SE England, E Angles: Snow showers, some moderate falls. Strong northerly wind. Very cold. Max 1C to 2C (34F to 36F).

Cent S, SW England, Midlands: Snow showers, mainly light falls, slowly in places. Strong northerly wind. Very cold. Max 1C to 3C (34F to 37F).

E England, Cent N, NE England, Borders: Mainly light snow showers, slowly in places. Fresh northerly wind. Very cold. Max 1C to 3C (34F to 37F).

Channel Isles, Wales, NW England, Lakes, Isle: Mainly light snow showers, mainly dry and bright, sunny intervals. Brisk northerly wind. Cold. Max 2C to 4C (36F to 39F).

Firth of Clyde, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: Mainly dry, sunny periods. Light northerly winds. Cold. Max 3C (37F).

SW, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Cent Highlands, Argyll, N Ireland: Dry, sunny periods. Light northerly winds. Cold. Max 4C (39F).

Outlooks: Cold easterly winds bringing snow showers to many areas. Bright in sheltered west.

24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=drizzle/snow; dsu=drizzle/sun; f=fog; g=gale; h=hail; i=ice; m=moderate; n=night; o=overcast; r=rain; s=sunny; sh=sleet; sht=sleet/hail; t=turmoil; w=wind; x=other; y=other; z=other.

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CHILLED OUT

Rugby counts the cost of untimely cancellations
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SEVEN-GOAL SPUR

Newcastle step up the pace in Premiership title race
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MARATHON RESOLVE

Sport for All
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CROWNING GLORY

David Miller recalls a remarkable show of bravery from Pete Sampras
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TIMES SPORT

MONDAY DECEMBER 30 1996

SURREY PAIR LEAD ENGLAND RECOVERY AND RAISE HOPES OF WIN



Stewart hooks powerfully on the way to celebrating his ninth international century to leave England in a position of promise in the second Test in Harare yesterday. Photograph: Howard Burditt

Stewart runs the show

FROM SIMON WILDE
IN HARARE

HARARE (fourth day of five): England, with seven second-innings wickets in hand, are 136 runs ahead of Zimbabwe

ONE year ago there were not many people in cricket prepared to give Alec Stewart much of a future at international level. He was nearing the end of a woeful tour of South Africa, had played only his parts in the two previous England Test series, against Australia and West Indies, and was approaching 33 years of age. He looked ready for one of the most heavily populated places in English cricket, the scrap heap.

Six months ago his future looked even more bleak. He had been duly dropped from the first home Test match of the summer with India and, for a while, was also missing from the Surrey side because his wife was seriously ill.

But just look at him now. The man who has always been last to give up on any cause yesterday dug England out of a hole in the second Test match against Zimbabwe at Harare Sports Club and, by the end of the day, had put them into a position from which they could yet pull off an unlikely win. Ten minutes before stumps he reached a ninth Test century — with successive off-driven boundaries against Olonga — that leaves him the leading run-scorer in Test cricket in 1996, tribute to a string of impressive scores against India, Pakistan and Zimbabwe.

That sequence might not have happened but for a strange series of events, starting with injuries to Knight

and Hussain that earned Stewart a recall to the England side and also involved the perennial debate about whether Stewart or Russell should keep wicket for England.

Perhaps the most unexpected decision taken by England or Zimbabwe came within a week of the touring team's arrival, when it was decided that Stewart would keep wicket and bat at No 3 in the Test matches, potentially putting him under greater strain than ever before as an England player. His response has been to score 48 and 73 in Bulawayo and 19 and 101 not out here. If his first century as batsman/wicketkeeper has serious ramifications for Russell's international future, it also means that Stewart's own England place has never looked more secure.

When Stewart came to the wicket on Saturday evening England were in desperate

trouble. Having conceded a first innings lead of 59, a considerable amount in a low-scoring contest such as this one, by the third over of the innings they had lost Atherton, pushing at an outswinger from Streak that in better days would effortlessly have been met by the middle of his bat. It left the England captain with a meagre total of 34 runs from four Test innings in Zimbabwe.

Stewart had only been at the crease for two overs when bad light brought an early end to a day restricted to only 52 overs, but he did not escape a stern test of character when play resumed yesterday. Streak and Brandes began the day with some incisive bowling that, in the case of Brandes, was repeated several times throughout the day. Despite the fact that he is the only bowler in the match still without a wicket, he was easily

the pick of the Zimbabwe attack, though it was Streak who might have had Stewart caught at square leg by Dekker minutes into the day.

Another of Stewart's great strengths is his inventiveness, as he showed in the run chase in Bulawayo. On a pitch as slow as this one, such an asset

Alan Lee 25
Lloyd reprimanded 25
Ambrose's triumph 25

is vital, as he showed in the first hour by outscoring Knight 26-7. Though Stewart's century occupied 369 minutes (and he scored 31, 29 and 31 in the three sessions), his rate of progress needed to be compared with those of others in this game. Crawley spent 220 minutes over his 47, Grant Flower 355 minutes over his 73; only Strang's even more

inventive innings of 47 came at a livelier tempo.

Stewart said: "I'm very pleased with my innings, and also for Graham Thorpe. He showed today what a great batsman he is and good players like him always come through a bad run of form."

While England's batsmen appear to have learnt some of the lessons of their pitiful performance on the first day, they are still constrained by the dour nature of the pitch. Poor Knight was unable to work out a modus operandi and, but for one wayward over from Olonga in which Knight helped himself to 11 runs, his 29-over stay would have looked even more laboured.

When Knight was caught at first slip by the wicketkeeper's pad off Strang it looked as though a crucial phase of the game may have begun, especially when the young leg-spin bowler quickly removed

Hussain, driving loosely in the covers. England were then 89 for three, a lead of just 30 and, with the out-of-touch Thorpe next in, they were up against it.

But by then Stewart's early uncertainties were behind him and he was exuding his now familiar assurance, while the pitch was offering Strang only limited assistance. The Zimbabwe players, doubtless inspired by the watching President Robert Mugabe, could keep the batsmen relatively quiet but they could not get them out.

Into this situation Thorpe entered and for some time looked like a man badly out of form. With his Surrey colleague for company, he battled away, no doubt heartened by the show of confidence awarded him by the England management who must have been tempted to promote Crawley ahead of him. In the next 3½ hours, he played the second best innings of the day. As he and Stewart chiselled out 106 runs for the fourth wicket.

If England are to prevent the match from slipping to a quiet draw today, this pair must survive the new ball — now six overs old — this morning and then help to drive their side towards another 100 runs by lunch. That is the earliest point at which England can hope to declare and bowl out Zimbabwe.

It is an optimistic scenario but not an entirely implausible one, especially after the wonderful way in which Gough bowled on Saturday afternoon to claw his side back into the match. Another tight finish, of the kind that took place in Bulawayo, cannot be ruled out.



Thorpe completes a determined fifty

ENGLAND: First Innings 158 (G J Whitall 4-18, H H Streak 4-43)	
N V Knight c Campbell b Streak .. 30 (104min, 88 balls, 3 fours)	
*M A Atherton c Campbell b Streak .. 1 (6min, 3 balls)	
TA J Stewart not out .. 101 (260min, 267 balls, 8 fours)	
N Hussain c Houghton b Streak .. 6 (30min, 27 balls)	
G P Thorpe not out .. 50 (220min, 189 balls, 6 fours)	
Extras (lb 5, w 1, nb 1) .. 7	
Total (8 wickets, 58 overs, 591min) .. 195	
FALL-OF-WICKETS: 1-7 (G J Whitall 4-18, H H Streak 4-43)	
BOWLING: Streak 19-5-47-1 (5 fours: 9-3-29-1, 6-1-14-0, 3-1-4-0); Brandes 21-8-48-0 (w 1: 5 fours: 9-3-17-0, 5-1-13-0, 6-2-15-0, 1-1-0-0); Gough 7-0-31-0 (no 1: 4 fours: 4-0-20-0, 3-0-11-0); Whitall 14-0-18-0 (1 four: 7-4-30-0, 4-1-20-3, 1-4-0-0); Strang 28-6-43-2 (2 fours: 2-0-27-2, 5-1-13-0, 1-0-4-0, 8 W Flower 7-2-8-0 (0-0-0-0, 2-0-0-0).	
SCORING NOTES: Third day: Stumps: 17-1 (5 overs, 27min; Knight 6, Stewart .. 101, 29; Thorpe 50, Strang 11, Hussain 6, Atherton 1, Dekker 1, 1 run)	
101, Bad light stopped play at 5.30pm — 12 overs lost. Fourth day: Lunch: 79-2 (23 overs, 149min; Stewart 41, Hussain 2). Tea: 197-3 (66 overs, 271min; Stewart 70, Thorpe 29). Second new ball: 190-3 (86 overs) at 4.28pm. Bad light stopped play at 5.02pm — two overs lost.	
ZIMBABWE: First Innings	
G W Flower c Crawley b Gough .. 73 (253min, 255 balls, 1 six, 5 fours)	
M H Daidker c Stewart b Mulhealy .. 2 (18min, 16 balls)	
*A D R Campbell c Thorpe b White 22 (71min, 53 balls, 2 fours)	
D L Houghton c Stewart b Gough .. 29 (125min, 124 balls, 1 four)	
TA Flower lbw b Gough .. 8 (18min, 18 balls)	
G J Whitall b Gough .. 1 (6min, 5 balls)	
P A Strang not out .. 47 (105min, 82 balls, 4 fours)	
H H Streak c Crawley b Croft .. 7 (41min, 34 balls)	
E A Brandes c Gough b Croft .. 9 (18min, 16 balls, 1 six)	
Extras (lb 8, w 1, nb 6) .. 15	
Total (105 overs, 427min) .. 215	
FALL-OF-WICKETS: 1-5 (G W Flower 3), 2-49 (G W Flower 17), 3-110 (G W Flower 40), 4-131 (G W Flower 60), 5-138 (G W Flower 61), 6-138 (G W Flower 61), 7-152 (Strang 8), 8-157 (Strang 38), 9-211 (Strang 43).	
BOWLING: Mulhealy 28-7-32-1 (w 1, 1 four: 7-2-14-1, 5-1-6-0, 9-3-8-0, 2-1-0-0); Gough 28-10-40-4 (no 3: 2 fours: 5-2-6-0, 6-3-7-0, 11-4-17-3, 4-1-10-0); Croft 18-2-38-3 (1 six, 1 four: 3-0-11-0, 5-0-12-0, 1-1-0-0, 5-1-16-3); White 18-4-41-1 (6 fours: 7-1-13-1, 6-2-12-0, 3-1-16-0); Tudball 26-3-65-1 (no 4: 1 six, 2 fours: 10-3-16-0, 8-0-22-1, 7-0-17-0).	
SCORING NOTES: Third day: start delayed until 12.40pm — 15 overs (net) lost. Test: 155-6 (85 overs, 346min; G W Flower 69, Strang 8).	
Umpires: K T Francis (Sri Lanka) and R B Tiller. Third umpire: D Robinson. Match referees: Harmand Singh (India).	
SERIES DETAILS: First Test (Bulawayo): match drawn (scores level)	
Compiled by Bill Frindall	

Turkey, broken fairy lights, relatives, turkey, chitty chitty, bang bang, relatives.

Yo-ho-ho.

Base BEST SELLING PREMIUM CASK ALE SINCE 1777

FOOTBALL: TOTTENHAM MANAGER BEMOANS LACK OF LUCK AS NEWCASTLE GET BACK TO BUSINESS

Francis finds reality hard to swallow

Newcastle United 7
Tottenham Hotspur 1

By MARK HODKINSON

THE tea lady at Newcastle United will not be applying for a job in the diplomatic corps. She nonchalantly placed a piece of cake before Gerry Francis, the Tottenham Hotspur manager, as he took his seat at the after-match press conference. He saw the irony immediately and pushed it to one side.

His team had arrived at St James' Park in playful mood and helped Newcastle to find the ghost of their cavalier past. "We just kept chasing the game but their chances were going in and ours weren't. They were picking us off very well at the end," Francis said.

After a cagey first 20 minutes, Newcastle and Tottenham scampers forward, ever forward, proffering football without a safety net. Eight goals were scored and numerous chances missed in an orgy of attacking football.

Newcastle were the victors because their rush of enthusiasm was underpinned by a semblance of discipline while Tottenham behaved like eager schoolboys in a trial match for the town team. In fact, they defended so deeply at times that they might have been swapping photography tips with the cameramen behind their goal.

After weeks of tactical tampering, Newcastle resorted to a traditional defensive formation of two centre halves and two full backs. When Gillespie was taken off suffering from concussion, it left them without a winger and this further honed their play. They took it in turns to exploit space on the flanks and Tottenham were left wondering from where and whom the next attack would emanate.

The first goal was typically Shearer. The England centre forward chased a punt upfield and, when he positioned himself between Carr and Calderwood, the rest seemed inevitable. He was first to the ball and rammed it past Walker.

Then a strong header from Howells landed fortuitously in Hislop's gloves. The Newcastle goalkeeper's clearance eventually fell to Beardsley



The frustration shows for Calderwood, of Tottenham, as Ferdinand rises to celebrate his second goal of the game for Newcastle

and, after some tricky footwork, the ball was deflected by Ferdinand beyond Walker from close range.

Tottenham's fingerhold on the match was lost on the hour, when Ferdinand raced in to crash home Beresford's fine cross. Two minutes later, as the Tottenham defence courteously set the gears in reverse, Lee carried the ball more than 30 yards before placing it in the net.

Philippe Albert joined in the fun and was picked out by Lee close to goal. He kept the ball low and it squirmed beneath

Walker. A fan charged onto the pitch, presumably to remonstrate with Walker, but the goalkeeper was unperturbed — it was the first sign of life he had come across, aside from the Newcastle players littering his goalmouth.

The final four minutes produced three more goals. A crisp shot from Shearer found the net after a pass from Lee and the midfielder scored himself after Batty had singled him out. In the final minute Tottenham deservedly scored when Nielsen interrupted Beresford's impromptu ball-

juggling five yards before placing the ball past a bemused Hislop. Rosenthal and Howells had earlier missed excellent chances.

Terry McDermott, Kevin Keegan's assistant, deputised at the press conference because Keegan had left the ground to be with his flu-stricken wife. McDermott was as bubbly as his perm, his moustache an inch higher than usual by virtue of a permanent smile. "That was what we call a Newcastle United performance," he said. "Hopefully, we will be back to

normal now. This win has been a long time due."

The victory was Newcastle's first in the league in eight matches and they had, up until Saturday, taken more than ten hours to score just five goals. Little wonder, then, that McDermott should crank up the hyperbole. "We have the type of players at this club who are able to go on and win the next eight or nine games. People who write us off do so at their own peril," he said.

McDermott, Keegan et al are right to savour an exhilarating victory in which, for

once, Newcastle fulfilled their attacking potential. This morning, however, when the players shiver on the training pitch, should bring salutary warnings that beating Tottenham Hotspur can sometimes be a piece of cake, but it need not necessarily be an *oeuvre* to a weekly feast.

NEWCASTLE UNITED (4-4-2): S. Shearer — S. Walker, D. Beardsley, P. Albert, J. Beresford — R. Gillespie (sub: L. Clark, 45th min), R. Lee, D. Batty, P. Beardsley — L. Ferdinand, A. Shearer.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (4-4-2): I. Walker — S. Carr, S. Campbell, C. Calderwood, C. Wilson — R. Fox, D. Howells, A. Nelson, A. Shinton (sub: J. Dorrrell, 46; sub: R. Rosenthal, 58) — S. Nielsen, S. Shearer.

Referee: R. Ashby

Cantona puts negative Leeds in their place

Manchester United 1
Leeds United 0

By DAVID MADDOCK

IT IS the season of goodwill, but what the hell. This was an awful game, thanks chiefly to a horribly negative Leeds United performance. There, we have got something that needed saying out of the way, and don't we all feel better for it?

The vast chasm that appeared between these sides earlier in the season, and prompted the Elland Road board to sack their manager, was not noticeably reduced on a fine winter's afternoon that begged for something brighter and lighter than this stodgy seasonal fare. Only the scoreline was:

Manchester United, constrained by the humbug-spirit of their opponents, exercised just as much control as that autumn day when a 4-0 victory suggested great European deeds were still possible from them. Within four days, Juventus banished such thoughts, of course, but another comprehensive beating of Leeds indicates that a more humble objective — is still plausible.

It is a depressing thought really, because this Manchester United side is not a patch on recent ones. Alex Ferguson has fielded. Yet they are still strong enough to have forced a team with the pedigree of Leeds to run up the white flag after eight minutes.

That was the moment Eric Cantona scored from the penalty spot, and the visitors simply shut up shop to avoid a pasting. Harsh? Not when the words of George Graham, the Leeds manager, are considered. "When you go 1-0 down after ten minutes, you just hope that the floodgates don't open," he said. "It is a lot to ask to come here and create chances, and I think we did well to restrict them."

Is it a lot to ask, though, for Leeds to have had a good go, even if they risked losing by a greater score? Surely a large holiday crowd deserves better. Surely Premiership sides should have greater ambition

than to lose 1-0? Surely it is better to have lost 3-0, and at least create a chance?

Leeds didn't, not one. Graham would argue that Manchester United didn't either, but, in fact they had two further opportunities despite the massed hordes in front of them, and despite the desperate nature of much of their own play. Cole, the substitute, headed wide when it seemed easier to find the net, and Johnsen was denied only by the agility of Martyn.

Perhaps a little Christmas spirit should be applied, because Manchester United are indisputably back on course in the title race, and few would bet against their experience, their knowledge of the way, after they closed the gap between themselves and Liverpool to two points on Saturday evening.

"We have not conceded a goal in our last three matches, and that is the consistency and strength in defence we need, to have a chance in the championship," Ferguson said.

"We let in far too many goals earlier in this season, bad ones, soft ones, crazy ones — but they all still counted against us. The encouraging thing is, even though this was a dear struggle, we did not make mistakes."

The nagging thought remains, however, that for all the doffing of his cap that Graham performed afterwards, representatives of Juventus, FC Porto, Atlético Madrid, Rosengård even, will have puzzled at the smell of such fear.

Manchester United were a study in the ordinary, punctuated by one moment of rare talent. Cantona and the sporadic Giggis combined exquisitely on the halfway line and then in the penalty area to create daylight, blacked out only by a foolish foul from Gary Kelly, the Leeds full back. Cantona converted the penalty, and Graham virtually handed them the title.

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-4-1-1): P. Schuster — G. Neville, D. Roy, R. Johnson, D. Wain — D. Beckham, R. Keane, P. Schuster (sub: N. Bunn, 45th min), R. Giggie, C. Giggie — D. S. B. (sub: A. Cole, 75).

LEEDS UNITED (4-4-2): I. Martyn — G. Kelly, C. Palmer, G. Halls, A. Dorset — R. Lee, L. Brown, A. Jackson, B. Dwyer — A. Yashin (sub: A. Gray, 70).

Referee: P. Alcock

Middlesbrough's birds of paradise have feathers ruffled



Huckerby: constant threat

And now, my Best Beloved, I will tell you the story of the man who loved beauty. Beauty was everything to him: he believed that he who owned beauty owned the world.

And it happened that he met another man, and this other man loved the love of beauty that he saw in the first man. And he said, I will obtain for you the three most beautiful things in the world, and I will give you a palace to put them in.

And so the man who loved beauty bought three beautiful birds: two from the forests of Brazil and one from the mountains of Italy. And he set them free in the beautiful palace that the second man had built for him, and he said: "I must be the happiest man in the world. I have beauty all around me."

And the first beautiful bird said: "I am surrounded by starlings. I am miserable." The second bird

said: "You don't feed me right, I am miserable." And the third beautiful bird said: "It's too cold, take me home." And all three beautiful birds lost their beautiful feathers and ceased to sing.

And they all lived unhappily ever after, and indeed, we are now waiting for the moment when the man who loved beauty is given a vote of confidence by the second man. For things at Middlesbrough are dire.

Bryan Robson's dream of bringing the beautiful game to Teesside has blown up in his face. A 3-0 defeat at Coventry City was exactly what was needed after the hint of resurgence given to them by the 4-2 win over Everton on Boxing Day.

Middlesbrough were soundly beaten on a horribly hard and slippery, frostbound pitch that was close to unplayable. Emerson, one of Robson's trio of beautiful

Simon Barnes watches as Bryan Robson's vision of the beautiful game is shattered by Coventry

foreigners, wearing black gloves and two pairs of shorts, looked plain bewildered by it all and spent most of the afternoon on his backside.

Ravanelli, in red gloves, spent his afternoon glaring at people — mostly those who, like himself, wore a red shirt. I tell you, Paddington Bear could learn something from the Ravanelli hard stare. A couple of times, when a colleague failed yet again to understand his elevated conception of football, he dealt a look that almost sliced his head off.

Juninho, beautiful import No 3, twittered about with style and purpose, but little effect. The odd thing was that all three exotics were trying hard, but it added up

to nothing. And nothing comes of nothing.

It has all gone horribly wrong. There seems little hope for it now. A few more results like this, and Robson will have to throw himself on his sword. His position is close to untenable. It is a sad tale. And behind the sadness is, of course, the giggling glee of the entire nation.

Glee at failure is, let us admit it, one of sport's pleasures. If not a specially edifying one. To see fancy foreigners getting their comeuppance is an unholy joy. Shane Warne getting slugged, Maradona missing a sitter, Schuster's car in the gravel. And on Saturday, Coventry was abuzz with glee: every time Emerson's bum hit the frost: every time

Juninho was bundled off the ball: every time Ravanelli was wrestled to the floor.

Robson came into football management with a wild dream of beauty and something in all of us responds to his failure. We seem to be happier with failure. Perhaps it is more our size.

Coventry are on a bit of a roll, with the traditional new manager's injection of desire. Under Gordon Strachan, they have beaten Newcastle United, Leicester City and Leeds United in successive matches, and they set about Middlesbrough with a confidence that such a run brings.

Huckerby was a handful for a defence that never settled. He opened the scoring, heading home Salako's cross as he nipped in between defenders. The game was wrapped up on the hour when Morris, under pressure from Huckerby, handballed in the box. McAllister, a figure filled with

confidence and command, did the job from the penalty spot.

Middlesbrough scored the third goal themselves when, five minutes from the end of normal time, Liddle crisply volleyed home Telfer's cross, again under pressure from Huckerby. If you get the impression that the Middlesbrough defence cannot handle pressure, then so did Coventry.

Alas, poor Bryan. He goes into the new year facing the dreadful truth: that football matches are not won by beauty alone. He must have been reading too many football writers. And meanwhile, his birds of paradise moult and shiver in the boreal climes of Teesside.

COVENTRY CITY (3-5-2): S. Ogrizovic — R. Shaw, L. Dwyer, D. Duffell — P. Toller, P. Williams, K. Richardson, G. McAllister, J. Salako — N. Whelan, D. Huckerby.

MIDDLESBROUGH (3-5-2): G. Walsh — N. Cox, S. Vickers, C. Morris (sub: J. A. Florant, 74th min), C. Liddle, Emerson, C. Richardson, A. Telfer, C. Hignett (sub: A. Campbell, 59) — M. Beck, F. Ravanelli.

Referee: S. Lodge

Off-key Sunderland provide fans with little to sing about

West Ham United 2
Sunderland 0

By KEITH PIKE

FAILURE to win a football match is no crime, particularly when — as Sunderland supporters witness at almost every match — a team as limited as theirs is pitted against expensive and exotically assembled opposition. But not even, apparently, to try? Unforgivable.

It is hard to believe that many of the two thousand or so expectant souls who followed their side almost the length of the country to shiver at Upton Park on Saturday would have appreciated this display. Sunderland, who have been widely and rightly praised for their resilience this season, were now worthy only of derision.

To get the excuses in first: Sunderland had played on Boxing Day. West Ham United had not, and the visitors were heavy-legged by comparison. They were also without Ball, the cornerstone of their midfield, and lost Russell, the deputy for the much-missed Quinn up front, with the match in its infancy. It would take more than that, though, much more, to explain away a performance so lacking in ambition and passion, let alone wit.

It did not need a genius to work out that West Ham were there for

the taking. Their dismal form — nine games without a win, including a humiliating Coca-Cola Cup exit against Stockport County — was a matter of record, their lack of confidence evident in the opening stages, when attack was unerringly transformed into desperate backpedalling by a series of poor passes, and when Mikosko was under threat as much from his own defenders as his rivals.

Yet Sunderland's response was to sit back and hope, to allow West Ham to play themselves into the ascendancy to leave the young

Bridges isolated: to invite defeat. By the time they had stirred themselves, it was too late. West Ham, ahead from the 35th minute, sealed their FA Carling Premiership victory with a fine solo effort from Raducioiu at the death.

Peter Reid's inquest was as low-key and unsatisfactory as his team's display. Here was someone who, as a player, epitomised the urgency so integral to the English game, refusing to condemn the unacceptance. Perhaps his team was playing to orders. "We weren't up to it today," was as near as he got to criticism.

Up for it might be nearer the mark. Until Bridges stretched Mikosko from 25 yards with 17 minutes remaining, the West Ham goalkeeper's only moment of concern had come when Bille's sliced clearance forced an early, instinctive save. The Croatia defender, perhaps sensing that his luck was in, then advanced to give his side the lead, with a header from a corner — unmarked, naturally.

Porfirio and Williamson each struck the woodwork before half-time. Dicks prompted an acrobatic save from Perez, and Sunderland were caught again when Raducioiu cleverly slipped Melville and ran from halfway to beat Perez in the style that George Weah has made his trademark — taken early and on the run, with precision rather than power the key. It was finishing of the highest order.

The Romanian striker, having issued a "play me or sell me" ultimatum, had been granted four minutes to prove his point and in that time showed more appetite for success than Sunderland had throughout. If this was not a one-off afternoon, Reid's men will be in serious relegation trouble.

WEST HAM UNITED (3-5-2): L. Mikosko — S. Bile, M. Pickett, J. Dicks — M. Brown, D. Williamson, J. Bishopp, J. Moncur (sub: F. Lampard, 66th min), M. Harris — M. Tiennot (sub: F. Raducioiu, 66), P. Porfirio.

SUNDERLAND (4-4-1-1): L. Perez — G. Hall, J. Melville, R. O'Grady, D. Kibumbu — D. Dicks, S. Appiah — B. Bridges, M. Smith (sub: S. Nelson, 52) — A. Reid — C. Russell (sub: M. Bridges, 27).

Referee: R. Dobbie

Nigeria make approach to lure Keegan

KEVIN KEEGAN, the Newcastle United manager, and Howard Wilkinson, the former Leeds United manager, have been approached by Nigeria to become their national football coach.

Nigeria, who won the gold medal at the Olympic Games in Atlanta by beating Argentina in the final, are seeking to enlist a high-profile European to succeed Jo Bonfrere, the former coach, who resigned in October.

"We have got in touch with high-profile managers such as Kevin Keegan, Howard Wilkinson, Louis van Gaal [the Ajax coach] and Johan Cruyff to select one for the vacant position of manager of the Super Eagles," Danladi Bako, assistant director of the Nigerian Sports Ministry, said.

Amodu Shaibu, who had been deputy to Bonfrere, has been coaching Nigeria since the Dutchman resigned alleging poor treatment and interference from the country's football authorities.

Nigeria hope to have a coach in place by next month. Bako said: "We are desperate to have a new manager to work with Shaibu. But the man to fill Bonfrere's position must be able to fit into and operate within the Nigerian situation."

Nigeria, who are preparing for a World Cup qualifying match away to Kenya on January 11, are second in their group behind Guinea, who lead on goal difference.

Excess of egg the lingering ingredient in Chelsea's mix

Chelsea 2
Sheffield Wednesday 2

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

STAMFORD BRIDGE is an exciting place to be. Messrs Gullit, Zola, Vialli, Di Matteo and Leboeuf bring an additional cosmopolitan flavour to SW6: the foreign tongues, Italian flags and south London humour add spice: the football is clean, competent and coherent. It is an altogether heady mix.

Cesare Maldini, the new Italy manager, flew in to survey the scenery on Saturday. Time for a swift appraisal of Zola and Di Matteo — sadly, Vialli never rose from the Chelsea substitutes' bench — and a quick look at what the FA Carling Premiership has to offer.

Italy play England at Wembley on February 12, in a crucial World Cup qualifying tie, and Maldini needs every clue he can muster. He was impressed by what he saw, through Azurri-tinted spectacles, and equally appreciated the pride and passion of the Premiership.

"I liked Zola, he did well," Maldini said. "Di Matteo was good in the second half." And what of England? What of Wembley in six weeks' time? The horse hacks were curious, desperate for a hint of trepidation in Maldini's cool, distinguished demeanour.

"We already know their players

well," he said. "It is a pity we can't watch their team before we play but I have videos of their games against Moldova and Georgia. That will be enough." He chatted freely before departing. A nice, courteous man.

Do not forget Sheffield Wednesday. Tactically sound if limited individually, they contributed greatly to a stirring spectacle. Zola tore them apart early on, tucking in Hughes's pass in the ninth minute and repaying the favour midway through the first half with a masterful chip. Hughes nodded it in, comfortably.

It was too much for David Pleat, the Wednesday manager, who left his directors' box perch for a worm's-eye view from the dugout. He might have missed Pembroke making it 2-1 with a scorching drive only 16 seconds later, as he descended to ground level by lift, but he was in time for some hasty reorganisation that determined the final outcome.

Atherton was subsequently designated to man-mark Zola and the tiny Italian never exerted the same influence. Atherton at least allowed him space when he took free kicks and corners — it would have been amusing had he not — but the point was made. Job done.

Pleat later conceded his initial error. "I had a plan for Zola," he said, "but it didn't work. So I had to change it." Zola accepted the com-

panionship of Atherton as par for the course. "I prefer my wife," he said, "but it was no problem. It was like that in Italy in every game."

Wednesday — now unbeaten in 11 matches, nine of them draws — were urged on by Hillsborough's travelling band of musicians, who kept up a hypnotic, samba beat throughout. "Tango," their topless cheerleader, displayed ludicrous loyalty on the most bitter of afternoons. It was perhaps fitting that his orange-shirted heroes should reward him in injury time.

Chelsea had long posed and postured. "I always felt we were the better side," Rudd Gullit, the player-manager, said, "but if you miss so many chances, you can always be surprised. We were sloppy, it was stupid." From looking likely victors, Chelsea were left with excessive egg on face.

Di Matteo's effort was ruled out at one end, for offside, and Gullit's defensive header was weak at the other. Stefanovic pounced, volleying in from 25 yards through the flailing grasp of Grodas, and the referee's assistant confirmed that it had crossed the line and he had scored his first goal for the club.

CHELSEA (3-5-2): F. Grodas — A. Dagny, R. Gullit, S. Clarke — D. Platt, C. Butler, E. Newman (sub: D. Wiles, 72nd min), R. D. Maltby, T. Probert — Zola, M. Hughes.

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (4-4-3-2): K. Pleat — I. Hackett, D. Wiles, D. Stefanovic, S. Nicol (sub: S. Grodas, 75th min), P. Atherton, G. Widdows, M. Pembroke, R. Humphreys (sub: G. Donnell, 61), A. Booth, B. Carbone (sub: R. Birtles, 75).

Referee: P. Duffin



City find it's not what you spend but the way that you spend it



Bosancic, the Serbian midfielder player, beats Margetson from the penalty spot for Barnsley's first goal against Manchester City. Photograph: Andrew Varley

Wilson's workers lighten the darkness

The mist crept down over the hills that Barnsley clings to and caked the town in an early dusk. The colliery wheel brooding in the valley that falls away from one side of Oakwell disappeared in the gloom as the second half began and opposite, sandwiched between the two tiers of the East Stand, the lights in the executive boxes came on.

Thirty groups of faces peered out through 30 steamy windows and watched a Trinidadian with skills so mercurial he made some of the Manchester City players look like Sunday League clodhoppers and a Serb who was as regal as Roud Gullit inspire Barnsley to a performance which tore the big boys from across the Pennines to pieces and lifted Barnsley to second place in the Nationwide League first division.

In the other imposing stand, behind the goal City attempted to defend in the first half, the home fans taunted their opponents with jeers of "going down, going down". By the end, the visiting fans, keen to take a pop at their chairman, Francis Lee, who was on holiday in the Caribbean, even gave their rivals one of the ultimate accolades. "I'd rather be in Barnsley than Barbados," they sang.

That might be giving the club a better press than even they deserve, but times are changing in this part of south Yorkshire. Barnsley and Oakwell might evoke thoughts of an old-fashioned ground — wooden seats, pipe smoke, low-slung stands amid rows of terraced houses and decaying facilities, and an up-and-under team to match — but the reality is rather different.

The reality is a club that has, so

Oliver Holt visits Oakwell, where a talented Barnsley side emerged 2-0 victors and got right back on track for fame beyond their own backyard

far, managed to marry the friendliness and earthy tradition that it has built up in a long history with a modern stadium that would not disgrace the Premiership let alone the first division and a thoroughly modern team with one of the best young managers in the sport, Danny Wilson. There are no Luddites here.

"The mistake people make," Wilson said after the game, "is thinking that the fans here have just been watching gritty football all their lives. It is perceived by people as flat caps and whippets up here and maybe it is. But that is not to say the supporters are not *au fait* with attractive football."

Their 2-0 win over City on Saturday moved Barnsley hot on to the heels of Bolton Wanderers, the team that knocked them off the top of the table on Boxing Day, when they lost at Stoke City, a defeat that was only their second in 17 games.

They have not got a big squad and Wilson's record signing is the £250,000 he paid for John Hendrie, compared with the millions being lavished on new players elsewhere. The plight of City, though, who have now won just seven points out of a possible 35 since their hapless caretaker-manager, Phil Neal, took charge, is evidence that big spending cannot buy you success.

Wilson, a Lancastrian who lived in Wigan until he was 16, says there is no secret behind the success he has brought across the Pennines. Careful husbandry is essential, of course, when the crowds average just over 9,000, a product, among others, of the disasters which have befallen the mining industry in recent years.

"It is all about the players," Wilson said. "If you can instil confidence in players at certain times and marry new players into your system, that is how you succeed. There are no superstars at this club. Most of them are only famous in their own backyard and maybe they want to change that. That can only help me."

By then, Barnsley were already two goals ahead. Bosancic, a majestic Serbian midfielder, scored the first from the penalty spot after Symons was rather harshly adjudged to have handled on the goaline, but there was no argument about the second. Sheridan picked out a fine run by Moses with a raking 50-yard pass and the resulting header boomed over Margetson.

City rallied briefly and Lomas should have pulled one back for them just before the interval, when he volleyed Heaney's cross wide, but for most of the second half, Barnsley were coasting, bursting into life occasionally. Even then, the understanding between their forwards, Hendrie and Wilkinson, surpassed anything City possessed.

"It's not just at we're up there," the club mascot, Tommy Tyke, said in his programme notes, "it's 'we've done it, playin' open, attackin' football boath 'oam an' away.' If they keep it up, the Premiership could be in for a treat next season."

BARNLEY (3-5-2): D. Wilson — M. Appleby, S. David, A. de Zeeuw — N. Eaden, J. Bosancic, C. Maradei, D. Sheridan, A. Moses — P. Wilkinson, J. Hendrie (sub: A. Lomas, 80th).

MANCHESTER CITY (4-4-1-1): M. Margetson — L. Crooks, K. Symons, J. Brightwell, E. McGovern (sub: M. Brown, 49) — N. Summerbee, S. Lomas, J. Whalley, N. Henney — G. Symons — U. Rosler. Referee: R. Poulton.

City bank on finalising Clark deal

By DAVID MADDUCK

MANCHESTER City hope to confirm Frank Clark as their fifth manager of a turbulent, and frequently farcical, season before the New Year's Day fixture at Birmingham City.

Negotiations with the former Nottingham Forest manager are at an advanced stage and the Maine Road board is expected to rubber-stamp Clark's demands this afternoon. If an agreement can be reached, then the club will call a press conference on Tuesday to unveil its new manager.

In the absence on holiday of Francis Lee, the City chairman, Clark has entered into negotiations with David Bernstein, the director with financial responsibilities. Sources at the club suggest that a deal is close to being completed to present Clark with the opportunity to inherit the position already occupied by Alan Ball, Asa Hartford, Coppell and Phil Neal, the caretaker-manager, this season.

Apart from the usual financial complications, Clark has also sought assurances about his control of team matters. He will bring in at least three of his own backroom

staff, with Alan Hill, the Nottingham Forest assistant manager, a likely candidate.

Lee will talk to directors tomorrow to approve the appointment if Clark can agree terms. The chairman's presence is not so necessary after control of City effectively passed to the businessman, Stephen Boler, when he purchased the largest single shareholding.

City are hoping that they can persuade Clark to accept the position before the next game in order to arrest a slide that has plunged them into the bottom four of the Nationwide League first division.

Young Cobblers please Atkins with confident forward march

Northampton Town 2
Barnet 0

By MEL WEBB

THERE was a time, not so long ago, when Northampton Town's football bore an uncomfortably close resemblance to their nickname, the Cobblers. No more. Under Ian Atkins, their hard-working manager, Northampton are fast becoming a force in the Nationwide League third division, and a convincing performance on Saturday underlined the point.

Admittedly, Alan Mulvey's Barnet were without some of their better players for this encounter on the blasted heath of Sixfields Stadium — Devine, Hodges and Hardyman were among those sick or injured — but that should not be allowed to detract from the qualities of Northampton.

Like so many of his contemporaries in the lower reaches of the league, Atkins is forced

to operate within financial constraints that would make a shoestring budget look expansive. Nonetheless, the former Sunderland player has built a first-team squad of predominantly youthful talent.

He has them playing decent football, too, and for that he can thank some of the more seasoned players in his side, who are providing the leavening of experience upon which his young Turks are building something worthwhile.

Sean Parrish, a £35,000 buy from Doncaster, and Neil Grayson were the driving forces in the Northampton midfield, and Barnet had no one to match them. A goal by Sampson five minutes before the break and another by Cooper nine minutes from time settled the issue.

Atkins has to juggle resources more, even, than most of his peers. Northampton play in a modern, council-owned stadium, and the rent they pay to the local authority is related to attendances.

Atkins is therefore compelled to save money on his playing staff while at the same time providing good, crowd-attracting football. The better they play and the more people who come to watch them, the more it costs. It is just a headache, but he is enjoying himself.

"I'm excited by what we've got going here," he said after a victory that saw his side move into sixth place in the table. "Some of the kids in this club are fantastic."

"I've never been in a club with a better set of young players. Anybody who is in the sort of position we're in with 20 games to go has got a chance of a play-off place. If we can maintain our form and don't suffer too much from injuries and suspensions, I believe we're in with a shout."

NORTHAMPTON TOWN (4-4-2): A. Woodman — S. Parrish, D. O'Shea, R. Wainwright, N. Grayson (sub: C. Lee, 80th), S. Parnell — M. Rush (sub: D. Morris, 88), M. Cooper. BARNET (4-4-2): M. Taylor — K. Pittaway, L. Parnell, L. Howarth, S. Gayle — M. Tomlinson, P. Wilson, R. Cooper, G. Brazil — D. Sarnelle, J. Campbell. Referee: D. Pugh.

Beauchamp lauds it at the Manor

Oxford United 2
Reading 1

By NICK SZCZEPANIK

OXFORD United held off a late rally by Reading in an entertaining Thames Valley derby — probably the last to be staged at the Manor Ground — and regained a place in the top six of the Nationwide League first division, a position Matt Elliott, their much-admired central defender, believes they can maintain.

"There's nothing to be scared of," he said. "We've shown we can beat the best teams; if we can improve our consistency away from home, it's a definite possibility."

Elliott may not be there to see it, however. Oxford, with a new ground to finance, have received a number of seven-figure bids for him, and the latest — £1.5 million from Graeme Souness, the Southampton manager, who watched the match — has been rejected. Elliott's defensive qualities would doubtless be missed, as well as his frequent forays upfield to lend his height and weight to attacks.

Scoring goals was more of a problem than keeping them out for Oxford on Saturday, though. They could have won by a much wider margin, even if one of the two they did manage would have graced any game.

Receiving the ball on the right after seven minutes, Beauchamp profited from a rebound and saw his chance to cut inside before swerving a high, left-foot shot over the leaping Wright from outside the penalty area. "The difference between the two sides was the bit of magic Beauchamp showed," Mick Gooding, the joint Reading player-manager, said.

True enough in the end but, in the meantime, there was Moody. A big centre forward of the old school, Moody has enjoyed his share of glory at the Manor Ground, but could do little right on Saturday. He shot wide, he inexplicably failed to make contact with a straightforward cross, he put a free header straight at Wright, and he volleyed wildly over the crossbar with only the goalkeeper in front of him — and that was just in the first half.

"Goalscorers keep going back for more, even when they miss chances," Denis Smith, his manager, said, but then admitted, "I would have liked him to take some. It would have made the last few minutes easier." Among Moody's less-than-magnificent efforts after the break were a shot that began as an attempt to control a skidding pass, and a gentle sidefoot into Wright's arms when a goal looked certain. Undaunted, he unleashed a fine, long-range effort shortly before being substituted for Murphy who, inevitably, doubled Oxford's lead.

Despite a porous defence based on a creaky offside trap, Reading had always been in the game, and they pulled a goal back when Morley squeezed the ball in from a tight angle after Williams, who was prominent in most of their best moments, had shot across goal. For a time, one wondered if a dropped baton that had cost Oxford dear in a pre-match relay race between young supporters was to be an omen; but this time the home side hung on.

OXFORD UNITED (4-4-2): P. Whithead — L. Robinson, M. Price, M. Ford, S. Mann — J. Beuschemm, D. Smith, M. Gray, R. Ford — P. Moody (sub: M. Murphy, 62nd), N. Johnson. READING (4-4-2): T. Wright — M. Eaddy, K. McPherson, A. Burrell, P. Budge — M. Williams, P. Hodge (sub: M. Gilbey, 54), D. Caskey, M. Gooding — L. Nogan (sub: J. Oates, 78), T. Morley. Referee: C. Wilson.

McStay adds artist's touch to Celtic's grand design

KEVIN MCCARRA



Scottish commentary

strengthen Celtic. The side already contains several talented individuals, but McStay could provide the strategic intelligence that has often been lacking.

For much of this season, Celtic had treated the midfield as if it were a bad neighbourhood that a wise man will rattle through as quickly as possible. McStay makes it the nerve centre of the match. A defeat of Dunfermline at Celtic Park, of course, can only be treated as sketchy evidence of the captain's condition.

Few opponents were good enough to interfere with McStay's plans and Burns can hardly be sure that the mid-field player is ready for a brush with Rangers, where he could struggle to catch up with a stampeding game. The extent of McStay's comeback,

In August, Tommy Burns, their manager, had said that McStay would have to be used sparingly in future and there has been gloom over the condition of the ankle, which has lost some of its flexibility. After such woe, one almost believed that Celtic were listing an invalid in their line-up.

McStay's vigour and stamina throughout 86 minutes on the field therefore took the audience by pleasant surprise. If the limbs can be kept in tolerable condition, then his unimpaired poise will

however, will be assisted by his own desire to complete it. Anyone passing through the foyer of Celtic Park at lunchtime on Friday would have seen a heavy-set, middle-aged man with a stick in his hand. Bobby Murdoch was the great governing influence in mid-field for the Celtic side that won the European Cup in 1967.

He damaged an ankle badly while still a teenager and, in all the triumphant years that followed, could rarely train fully. Murdoch's shrewdness and innate talent allowed him to surmount limitations, but it was also the sheer joy of participating in a superb side that allowed him to continue.

The analogy with McStay is not perfect. The Celtic captain can be glad that his injury has come much later in life and will receive far more sophisticated treatment than Murdoch's did. It is also true that McStay's side will never come close to the standards achieved in 1967. Nonetheless, there is a comparison to be drawn.

In Jorge Cadete, Andreas Thom, Paolo Di Canio, McStay, too, has team-mates who make a mid-field player eager for action. The captain has had to suffer a great deal of frustration in what ought to have been the peak years of his career. By the time he was 24, McStay, in 1989, had won three league championships, three Scottish Cups and one League Cup.

Since then, in a desolate period from which the club is beginning to recover, he has added just one Scottish Cup success. McStay has always been a devoted servant but now that Celtic have again found genuinely exciting players, selfishness may prove the greatest motive of all as he seeks the pleasure of a place beside them.



McStay: purged fears

Jolly good Fellows stands up for the fall guys

There is something rather satisfying about getting an entire live sporting event under your belt before *Grandstand* has even started. There is something rather strange, however, when that event is skiing. No matter how long I watch, I still do not know quite what to make of a sport where the winner's first reaction on crossing the line is to rip off a ski and shove the logo into the face of an obliging cameraman.

There was lots of that in evidence over the weekend, with two women's slalom races from Semmering, in Austria, and a men's downhill from Bormio, in Italy. All three started on time, were completed over the full course and were very exciting.

At last, after the disappointments of Val d'Isère and Val Gardena, the Alpine ski season was doing exactly what the

broadcasters wanted it to do. The BBC celebrated... by postponing *Ski Sunday* until Wednesday, when for reasons known only at Television Centre, it will be called *Ski Sunday Special* and will be mainly about ski-jumping.

Although the BBC managed to fit highlights of the first race from Semmering into *Grandstand*, this was Eurosport's chance to shine with live coverage of all four legs of the women's races and the men's downhill. The Paris-based satellite channel took it — though not with total conviction.

There was no doubting the quality of the pictures provided by the host-broadcaster at either venue, although the Austrians had an easier time of it than their Italian colleagues, who faced the challenge of capturing an



MATTHEW BOND
TV ACTION REPLAY

unprecedented number of high-speed fallers. But there was something uncharacteristically remote about the commentary being provided by David Goldstrom, in Austria, and Nick Fellows, in Italy.

They were certainly both there in spirit, but something — a lack of camp gossip, perhaps — made me wonder if they were there in body as well. A number of skiers, Fellows told us, had chosen to spend Christmas with their families. I wondered whether a couple of commentators

might have very understandably chosen to spend the weekend in the easily reached comfort of Eurosport's Paris studios rather than face the deep freeze of the Alps.

I am hard pushed to hazard a guess. Only the lack of English-speaking skiers from Fellows's normally busy commentary box suggests that the Paris option is probably the right one. Mind you, given the attraction rate at Bormio, perhaps nobody who spoke English had got to the bottom. For one weekend it did not

matter. The image problem that women's skiing still faces is more serious than anything that could be solved by just having the experienced Goldstrom on site.

As for the men's race, watching Luc Alphand and the ski gang struggling to stay upright on snow as hard as concrete was so thrilling it almost did not need a commentary. Nevertheless, Fellows was on hand to explain all about uphill and downhill skis, weight transfer and the importance of pre-jumping.

With the exception of Alberto Tomba's second runs in the slalom, the men's downhill remains the blue ribbon Alpine event and Fellows works immensely hard to turn faceless, rubber-faced competitors into real people. The pictures are beyond his control, but the sound is not.

Normally, half the Canadian team drop in for a chat and a spot of co-commentating, and a brace of "amazing Vikings" pop in to show off their multilingual skills.

It is exactly what the sport needs. Rather than turning the skiers into high-speed advertising slogans (Deborah Compagnoni won yesterday's slalom not only with the traditional flourish of one ski but with a Seal logo taped to her helmet), the ski authorities and the host-broadcasters should concentrate on turning them back into people.

That means better coverage of the warm-up and warm-down areas and more help for commentators with identification when bib-numbers are obscured. Of course, a good commentator will recognise the whole field by sight. Back home, I'd be happy with three.

German yacht wins Sydney-Hobart race

THE German maxi, *Morning Glory*, broke the 21-year record for the Sydney-to-Hobart race, one of yachting's most coveted prizes, when she won line honours in the 630-nautical mile race. The 80-foot maxi took 29min 46sec off the record of two days 14hr 36min 56sec set by *Kialoa*, the United States maxi, in 1975. "We lost it three times and then we won it. It was a great win," Hasso Plattner, the owner of *Morning Glory*, said after crossing the finish line. *Morning Glory* boasted some of the world's best sailors, including the America's Cup helmsman, Russell Coutts.

Plattner said: "We had a terrible start but we recovered from that. Then we ran into a southerly front and had to lower the mainsail because the leech line broke. At one stage we were ten miles behind the leader. Then, off Tasman Island, the wind started to die away." The pocket maxi, *Exile* and *Foxit Amazon*, finished second and third, with the Australian yacht, *Ausmaid*, emerging as the leader on handicap after crossing the line in seventh place behind *Morning Glory*.

Jaguars snatch victory

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: A late 45-yard field goal by Mike Hollis bounced through off the upright to give the Jacksonville Jaguars a 30-27 victory over Buffalo Bills in the first National Football League play-off on Saturday. The victory sent Jacksonville into the divisional play-offs, earning them a game with either Denver or New England. For the Bills, the American Football Conference's dominant team this decade with four Super Bowl appearances and as many losses, it was their first play-off defeat at Buffalo's Rich Stadium.

They could not handle Natrone Means, who rushed for 175 yards. Means had a 30-yard touchdown run, then a 62-yard run that led to a first field goal for Hollis. Though Bills struck back to go 27-20 ahead, Jacksonville produced a 65-yard drive to tie the game, before their winning goal.

Morgan must specialise

BOWLS: Betty Morgan, the Welsh indoor singles champion, is on the brink of winning all four national indoor championships — she has reached the semi-finals in singles, pairs, triples and fours — but fixture pressures mean that she will not be allowed to compete for more than one British Isles title when the championships begin in Perth in March. "It's a bit early to be talking about more than one title, because I could come crashing out of them all in the semi-finals," Morgan said yesterday. "But it does seem unfair that someone who wins more than one national title should be denied the chance of going on to compete in the equivalent British events."

Rusedski pulls out

TENNIS: Greg Rusedski, right, has been forced out of the Adelaide Open, starting today, because of injury, disrupting his planned build-up to the Australian Open. The British No 2 had wanted to use the Adelaide tournament to prepare for the first of the four grand-slam events, but has withdrawn, suffering from blisters. His concern will be that his fitness returns in time to play the Australian Open in Melbourne, starting on January 13.



Frustration for Hull

RUGBY LEAGUE: Hull were upset after yesterday's friendly against York was called off because a flu bug had laid low several York players. A Hull official said: "The entire saga is ridiculous and we are far from happy about the way things have been done." Stuart Horton, the York coach, said: "I couldn't raise a team — I had so many players reporting in sick, the numbers left didn't add up to a team." Oldham's plan to stage a nostalgic farewell match at Watersheddings against Swinton yesterday fell victim to the weather. It has been rearranged for next Sunday.

Doherty's mixed start

SNOOKER: Ken Doherty, the defending champion, suffered mixed fortunes as he began the defence of his Dr Martens European League title at the Diamond Centre, Irthlingborough. The 27-year-old from Dublin, overwhelmed John Parrott, of Liverpool, 7-1 in his opening contest. Against Peter Ebdon, however, Doherty recorded breaks of 120 and 139 but still ended a 5-3 loser. Doherty, the world No 7, had been scheduled to face Jimmy White in his second game but the match was postponed because of the recent death of White's mother.

Storm warning

ICE HOCKEY: Manchester Storm paid a heavy price for the number of defensive errors they made in their 7-4 defeat by Bracknell Bees on Saturday, for the result sent them to the bottom of the Superleague table. Sheffield Steelers joined Newcastle Cobras in second place after a 3-2 win over Nottingham Panthers, Nicky Chinn scoring the winning goal two minutes into overtime. It was the Panthers' first defeat in six games.

Croatia come through

TENNIS: Croatia, the No 1 seeds, beat Australia 2-1 on the first day of the Hopman Cup in Perth yesterday. Mark Philippoussis, of Australia, took 59 minutes to beat Goran Ivanisevic, the world No 4, 6-2, 6-3 to level the tie at 1-1 after Ivan Majoli drew first blood for Croatia with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Nicole Pietrangeli. In the deciding doubles tie, the Croatia pair secured victory with a 7-5, 7-5 win. In the second group A match, United States beat France, the No 4 seeds, 2-1.

ATHLETICS

Brown set to miss trials for world championships

BY DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

JOHN BROWN stole the show in the Bupa County Durham cross country on Saturday, completing the most impressive sequence of victories by a British athlete this year, but refused to acknowledge that he might win a medal at the world championships this winter. Paula Radcliffe was unable to make it a British double, finishing third, but was optimistic that a world medal is a definite prospect. More likely, perhaps, than if she had won at the weekend.

Brown, normally plain-speaking, and with a no-nonsense approach to his racing, turned riddler after his victory. After wins this month over Paul Tergat, the world champion, from Kenya, and in the European championships, he did not fall for the surging tactics of Daniel Komen, the International Amateur Athletic Federation distance runner of the year. Brown's even pace left him with the strength to pull away from the Kenyan in the closing stages to win by three seconds.

Having said that there would be enough Africans in shape to run 20min 30sec for 10,000 metres in Turin in March to keep him out of the world championship medals, Brown said that he would not be running in the British trials for the world track championships in Athens next summer. "There is something going to be happening at that time of year that puts two 10,000 metres races like trials and the Athens final into a less important perspective," he said, begging the question: "What?" He would not say, except that it was personal and nothing to do with running.

This means that Europe's No 1 men's distance runner of 1996 will be absent from the British world championship trials for both cross country and track. While there can be no doubt that he will be picked for Turin, the British Athletic Federation operates a policy of insisting that athletes compete in their track trials.

The move towards younger, more in-touch selectors for



Brown: trials riddle

cross country — David Clarke, Eamonn Martin and Alison Wyeth among them — suggests that Brown and Radcliffe will be picked for Turin, regardless of the trials. Radcliffe, normally loyal to the trials, said that she wanted to try a different approach to the world championships this year after a series of winter setbacks since she won the world junior title in 1992. This will mean training at altitude in Albuquerque at a time that coincides with the trials. It is amusing to think that Radcliffe, who broke Zola Budd's British 5,000 metres record last summer and was

close to an Olympic medal in fifth, has never finished higher than eighteenth in the world cross-country event in her four years as a senior. Each time, either illness or injury has intervened. Now recovered from the knee trouble that restricted her training until four weeks ago, she is hopeful that building to a peak over four months will prove more successful than attempting to hold the early-season form reflected by her past wins in Durham.

"My problem is that I have been in shape at this time of year and have not been able to sustain it," she said. "That is why, this year, it may be a good thing that I have been seen back." She recalled how, in the season that she won her junior world title, she had a "terrible" run in Durham. "I turned it around to be in the right shape in March," she recalled.

Radcliffe described her latest performance as "OK". Gete Wami, the world champion, from Ethiopia, and Elena Fidatov, a Romanian who finished close behind her in the Olympic final, proved stronger on the run-in. "I struggled on the hills because I am not as strong as I normally am at this time of year," Radcliffe said.

Next season, this popular event may have to move and organisers are considering alternatives, possibly switching to another part of the country. County Durham's sponsorship is at an end, though the City of Durham remains committed, as does Bupa. However, with four years of a five-year television deal with the BBC still to run, it is not on its last legs.



Compagnoni smiles on the winner's podium after gaining her first World Cup win

Determined Alphand leaves rivals sprawling in his wake

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

LUC ALPHAND, surprising himself with his determination, won his second World Cup downhill of the season yesterday on a treacherous piste in Bormio, Italy, that claimed several rivals.

Alphand, winner of the men's World Cup downhill title for the past two seasons, clocked 2min 05.1sec down the steep and icy Stelvio piste, bathed alternately in bright sunshine and deep shade through the trees.

"It's a great way to finish the year," said the 31-year-old Frenchman, who has now won eight World Cup races. William Besse was second in 2min 07.2sec to become the first Swiss downhill skier this season to step on the podium. Kristian Ghedina, Alphand's main rival after four downhill titles, was third in 2min 08.1sec and the first Italian on the podium in Bormio since the resort first hosted a race in 1993.

Five of the first eight men on the starting list failed to make the finish. The race organisers put extra water on the higher

turns overnight to harden the piste and hold it together, and many of the racers found difficulty controlling their skis.

Hans Krauss, the overall World Cup leader, starting first, almost fell at the Carcentina bend when his skis veered away from under his body, and retired halfway down the hill.

Brian Stemmle, of Canada, skied out at the top. Peter

Results

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Runggaldier, of Italy, went the same way. Patrick Ortlieb, the world champion, did not start due to a stomach bug and Bruno Kern, of Switzerland, crashed out.

Meanwhile, in the women's World Cup slalom in Semmering, Austria, Deborah Compagnoni, of Italy, scored the first World Cup win of her career. Two near-perfect runs down an icy piste earned her victory by more than a second.

Compagnoni, who has won Olympics gold medals in giant

slalom and Super-G, kept her composure in temperatures of -17C to win both runs for a total time of 1min 42.94sec.

Patricia Chauvet, of France, profited from the failure of Elfi Eder, of Austria, to complete the 62-gate second run, improving one place to overall second in 1min 43.99sec. Claudia Riegler, the Austrian-born New Zealander, winner of the first two slaloms of the season, improved three positions in the second run to snatch third place in 1min 44.65sec.

Fernilla Wiberg, of Sweden, who won the slalom on Saturday to take the overall World Cup lead, lost her chance for a double victory when she nearly missed a gate in the first run.

Nevertheless, she scored the fastest time, 50.35sec, on the second run to take fourth place in the race and widened her lead in the overall standings over Katja Seizinger, of Germany, who did not compete in either of this weekend's slalom events.

Snow reports, page 29

BASKETBALL

Leopards take their revenge

BY NICHOLAS HARLING

JOHN WHITE threw the Budweiser League title race wide open last night by scoring 33 points, to help the Leopards to beat the joint leaders, Sheffield Sharks, 85-79 in the Sheffield Arena.

In the process of gaining their win, which moves them up to the clutch of clubs on the 20-point mark, the Leopards also earned an important psychological advantage for next month's Sainsbury's Classic Cup final at the same venue. Narrowly beaten at home by the Sharks six weeks ago, the Leopards set off determined to avenge that reverse. Within two minutes they had

collected the first six points and it was not until Vince Winters opened the Sheffield reply that the home side started to make any real impression.

Even so, it took them until 38 seconds from the end of the first quarter before they took the lead for the first time through Winters. At this stage the 6ft 6in American was irresistible and he had scored 14 of his side's points and, by half-time when the Sheffield lead was still intact at 45-39, Winters had collected 19 points.

There was no hint then of the havoc that White might

cause. Marked astutely by Chris Finch, he had been limited to eight points before he cut loose soon after the start of the third quarter.

The Sharks had assembled an earlier 10-0 surge but they were upstaged by the Leopards, especially White, who hit four three-pointers in an 18-2 sequence. From 44-39 adrift, the Leopards were suddenly in front at 57-51, a lead they never looked like losing. The aggressive Robert Youngblood was fouled out with six minutes to go but the London side made light of that handicap, all the more so when Winters went too with 90 seconds left.

SAILING: CREWS PREPARE FOR LASHING FROM TAIL OF HURRICANE FERGUS AS SECOND LEG NEARS END

Global Challenge fleet goes onto storm-force alert

BY EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

THE last thing most of the BT Global Challenge yachts or their crews need is a severe storm just as they near the end of a tough second leg across the Southern Ocean to Wellington, which has caused rig damage to six boats.

Early today, though, there was a strong likelihood that much of the fleet would encounter storm conditions from the tail-end of Hurricane Fergus, as they head in towards their landfall in New Zealand.

Now classed as a tropical storm, what is left of Fergus was moving down the North Island from Aus-

land towards Wellington, with forecasters predicting winds gusting 70 to 90 knots and kicking up a strong easterly swell. All the crews have prepared to deal with extreme conditions and race organisers were keeping a close watch on the storm's progress.

On *Courtauld's International*, which is struggling along in thirteenth position, 630 miles adrift of the leader, there was apprehension about what might be in store. "The saying the 'calm before the storm' appears to be very appropriate, as we drift slowly along in very little wind, with Hurricane Fergus forecast to arrive during Monday, directly in our path for Wellington. It would

appear the Southern Ocean is full of surprises and its unique quality is the speed at which the weather changes," the crew reported.

The finish itself was turning into something of a replay of the

BT Challenge chart

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agonisingly slow conclusion to the first leg into Rio de Janeiro. Mike Golding, on *Group 4*, still looked likely to win the leg but his lead was being eaten away by Andy Hindley, on *Save The Children*, in second place.

For the past few days, Golding has

maintained an advantage of around 60 miles over Hindley but with just 75 miles left to sail to the line, he was making just 0.6 knots after being caught under the lee of the land in the Cook Strait, which divides the North from the South Island. Hindley was still doing 9.4 knots out at sea and had reduced the deficit to 40 miles.

Golding's likely victory in the leg, however, gives him a strong overall position in the race, after his win in the first leg. He has also reinforced the all-important psychological edge he has enjoyed over his fellow skippers from before the start.

After *Save The Children*, there is a gap of around 160 miles to *Toshiba Wave Warrior* in third place and a

further 80 miles to *Motorola* in fourth. There is then a tight battle still going on between *Global Teamwork*, *Commercial Union* and *Pause To Remember* for fifth, with the three boats early today ten miles apart in terms of their distance to the finish.

The crew on *Concert* is getting bored with listening to their engine, 11 days after the dismasting which put them out of the leg. They were expecting to arrive at the Chatham Islands, about 420 miles east of Wellington, some time tomorrow. Assuming Fergus is kind to them, they are then planning to refuel and head straight for Wellington, where they hope to arrive about three days later.

THE NEW LESSON

West I enough postpone

SCOREBOARD

Fired-up Don work of fragile

SCOREBOARD

Lesson for Atherton in Ambrose's renaissance

Similarities between Michael Atherton and Curtly Ambrose are not readily apparent but, in these past few weeks, they have had a surprising amount in common. For years, their respective teams have relied upon them for inspiration, the extent of the dependence only obvious when the inspiration runs chronically short.

The fact that England generally prosper when Atherton makes runs is endorsed by the value every opposing team places upon his wicket, even when he is in demonstrably poor form. And, while it might seem more logical to compare him with Brian Lara, the truth is that the best indicator of West Indian vibrancy has long been the level of spring in Ambrose's knees and the degree of animation in his expressive eyes.

Atherton will be profoundly concerned this morning, not

only through the condition of his touring England team but the health of his own batting. Despite the relative recovery yesterday, bulletins on both have been uniformly depressing. Consolation is at hand, however, through the astonishing renaissance of Ambrose and West Indies, a compelling example of how quickly the fortunes of cricketers can be transformed.

Three weeks ago today, I left Australia believing that the five-Test series for the Frank Worrell Trophy had effectively been decided in two games. West Indies had not only been outplayed and defeated in both the initial Tests, their spirit and stature had been drained to a level from which early recovery seemed impossible.

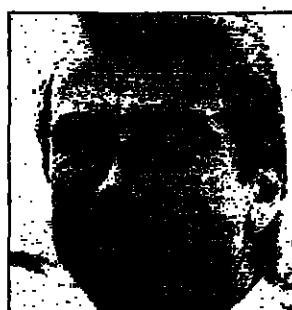
Early on Boxing Day morning, I had a wake-up call from an Australian journalist, lamenting a story he wished he

had not written. "Who would have been idiot enough to write off Curtly Ambrose?" he mocked himself. "Who?" Ambrose, he said, had taken five cheap wickets on the first day in Melbourne and West Indies were back in business.

The writer was not alone with his regrets. Anyone who observed the first two Tests would have shared his suspicions as Ambrose took three extravagantly expensive wickets, bowling without rhythm or self-belief. We have seen his monumental sulks before, but this one looked terminal and, without him, West Indies could generate no steam, no fire, no momentum.

But Ambrose, though gloweringly unapproachable to all but his inner circle, is an intensely proud man. He detested the fibres that he was only seeing out his time with a few more pay-cheques and resented the unfamiliar

ALAN LEE



Test match Commentary

subservience of his team. He told them he would take ten wickets in the next Test and failed by only one to keep his promise. Staggeringly, the Melbourne Test was won

inside three days, its abiding memories the high-kicking approach and high-energy celebrations of a giant revived.

Atherton can be as deep and private as Ambrose but he is still more inscrutable when troubled by failing form. Up to now, he has always managed to put things right when it mattered, making runs in Test cricket even when looking clueless in lesser contests. But 1996 was not a good year for him and there has been no comfort whatever from the last month.

His 16 Test innings this year have produced 469 runs at an average barely above 30. He has not reached 50 in the last seven of those innings and, against the newest and humblest of Test nations, he has totalled 34 runs in two matches.

The cares of captaincy make it no easier for him. His

team has looked vulnerable and the neurotic utterances of his confident and accomplished coach, David Lloyd, have done him no favours.

To make matters worse we now have the sideshow of Ian Botham, entrusted by Atherton and Lloyd with an honorary input of advice, complaining in a Sunday newspaper that he had not been consulted on selection and proclaiming, in effect, that he should be running the show. Laugh it off though he may, this was hardly what a beleaguered captain needs.

All might look so much rosier, however, if only Atherton could make a decent score. It scarcely looks likely right now, for his feet are as reluctant to move to his favourite tune as were Ambrose's in Sydney a month ago. He is pushing and poking from a crouch-bound pose and giving slip-catching

practice. His dismissal, for one, on Saturday evening was stereotypical.

There will, inevitably, be claims that he is burnt out, that his famed powers of concentration are eroded beyond repair and that he should be replaced — as a batsman and, by consequence, as captain. He knows enough to expect all this; he should also know enough to be comforted by the experience of Ambrose, by the knowledge that it can take only one match to restore rhythm and banish the blues.

It would not be in character for Atherton to imitate Ambrose by promising his players that he will make a double-century in England's next Test match, four weeks from now in Auckland. But he should at least remind himself that, like his old West Indian adversary, he has the ability and the character to do so.

Reformers increase pressure on England to perform

FROM SIMON WILDE IN HARARE

ENGLISH cricket is fighting battles on two fronts in Zimbabwe. One is for its reputation on the field; the other is for its public image. A losing national side has remained financially durable beyond expectations; how long it can remain so when it is perceived to be surrounded by controversy and confusion, is uncertain.

In Bulawayo last Sunday, David Lloyd, the England coach, was involved in a heated exchange of words with a local cricket official directly after the end of the tense first Test match and yesterday Lloyd was obliged to deny a Sunday newspaper report of an alleged rift with Ian Botham, who is acting informally as a technical adviser to England's bowlers.

At other times, such incidents might not have created a stir but the timing now is unfortunate because, among the spectators to fly into Harare for the second Test match, were Tim Lamb and Lord MacLaurin, recently appointed chief executive and chairman respectively of the Test and County Cricket Board. Both are intent on defending the game's image in a competitive marketplace and anxious that nothing should happen to harm it.

Thus, although the "Lloyd affair" was deemed closed before he arrived on Boxing Day, Lamb quickly made it his business to speak to the England coach about the Bulawayo incident. Lamb would not disclose details yesterday of their meeting, except to say that he had taken "appropriate action". MacLaurin, who arrived on Saturday, was quick to point out: "Public relations and the way we present ourselves is of the utmost importance."

MacLaurin has been hailed as the man who can bring English cricket thoroughly up to date. "We have got to get the England team right," he said. "Everything flows from that. We cannot look at the recent progress of the England side and say these things are cyclical. There are fundamental things wrong."

CRICKET

West Indies find enough pride to postpone era's end

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN MELBOURNE

MELBOURNE (third day of five): West Indies beat Australia by six wickets

SO, NOW we know: West Indies are not yet a spent force. By winning the third Test match in Melbourne by six wickets, with two days to spare, they reminded everybody that, though their powers have diminished, they still retain their pride. With two Tests to play, at Adelaide and Perth, they could yet win the series and regain the Frank Worrell Trophy that they ceded to Australia in the Caribbean last year.

Courtney Walsh, their captain, will remind his players that they went to Adelaide one-down four years ago, won there by one run and vanquished Australia on a fast pitch in Perth. Curtly Ambrose may chime in with a few thoughts of his own for he did most of the vanquishing that time on his way to 33 wickets, a record tally by a West Indies bowler in an Australian series.

Ambrose was again the match-winner on a bouncy pitch at the MCG, taking five wickets on the first day and

another four on Saturday to finish with match figures of nine for 72. His bowling was altogether too much for Australia, who surrendered their second innings for 122, leaving West Indies to get 87 for victory. Despite the loss of three early wickets, including that of Brian Lara to the excellent Glenn McGrath, they were safely home by nightfall.

Lara's form is the main area of concern as West Indies approach Adelaide. Ambrose has three weeks in which to nurse a sore groin, but the team's star batsman is looking increasingly exposed. He batted here at No 4, behind Shivnarine Chanderpaul, and has now made only 77 runs in this series. On Saturday he slashed McGrath to point — the fifth time the bowler has dismissed him in this series.

For once, however, it is the Australians who must take stock before the Tests resume. They have become such a powerful team in recent years, with an abundance of talented young players, that this failure has concentrated a few minds. Mark Taylor, an outstanding

captain, has not passed fifty in Test cricket for a year, and getting the shape and balance of the side right is proving troublesome.

Matthew Hayden and Justin Langer, the left-handers brought in to bat at Nos 2 and 3, made ducks on Saturday. Hayden, leaving alone a straight ball from Ambrose, was bowled and Langer, attempting to hook the bowler, offered a looping slip catch off his body and the back of the bat to Carl Hooper. Having dropped Ricky Ponting and Michael Bevan to accommodate them, they must now ponder whether to persist with these unproven batsmen at Adelaide.

It still seems extraordinary to English eyes that Michael Slater, the star-making opener, has fallen from favour. His demolition, coupled with the freak knee injury to Matthew Elliott, has left the Australians vulnerable at the top of the order, the more so as David Boon's retirement has left a gap at No 3 that Ponting, for all his promise, has not filled. Perhaps it was asking too much of a man just turned 22 to match up to such high expectations. Whatever, they are in a bit of a pickle.

The bowling needs patching up, too. Jason Gillespie tore an intercostal muscle on his left side on the second day, and will be out of action for up to six weeks. Damien Fleming has been injured and Michael Kasprudz has been dropped, so there may be a summons for Andrew Bichel, who has been among the wickets for Queensland in the Sheffield Shield and has been called up — along with Stuart Law — for the next round of one-day matches.

Through injury, loss of form and selection wavering, the team has been disturbed and, with a tour of South Africa prefacing the one to England in May, there are important decisions to be taken soon.



Steve Waugh, so often the Australia saviour, is bowled by Benjamin for 37 to end the innings on Saturday

Steve Waugh cannot keep on bailing them out with his runs, and McGrath and Warne are being forced to bear an intolerable load with the ball.

McGrath took his 100th Test wicket when he had Samuel's leg before (rather fortunately, it must be said, since he delivered the ball wide, from round the wicket, and two stumps were visible at the moment of impact) and he has taken only 23 games to get them. That is the record of a formidable bowler, but even the best bowlers need support and, apart from Reifel, he lacks a regular mate.

West Indies, meanwhile, can regroup in the one-day round-robin series which also involves Pakistan, who beat Australia A in Sydney on Saturday. Had they lost in Melbourne, it would have been the end of an era. By Perth, it still might be but, for the time being, thanks to Ambrose, the series remains within their reach.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA: First Innings 219 (G S Blewett 82, S R Waugh 56; C E L Ambrose 5 for 55)	
Second Innings	
M J Hayden b Ambrose	0
M A Taylor c Hooper b Walsh	10
J L Langer c Hooper b Ambrose	10
M E Waugh b Walsh	15
S R Waugh b Ambrose	37
G S Blewett c McGrath b Walsh	45
H A Healy b Ambrose	0
P R Reifel b Ambrose	8
S R Warne c Adams b Ambrose	2
J H Gillespie b Ambrose	2
G D McGrath not out	2
Extras (b 4, w 1, nb 1)	16
Total	122
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-3, 3-28, 4-47, 5-64, 6-76, 7-107, 8-113	
BOWLING: Ambrose 12-4-17-4; Blewett 10-25-0; Benjamin 12-5-34-3; Walsh 11-4-1-3	
WEST INDIES: First Innings	
S I Campbell b McGrath	7
R G Samuels c Taylor b Warne	17
C L Cairns c Taylor b McGrath	56
C L Cairns c Taylor b McGrath	56
C L Cairns c Taylor b McGrath	56
C L Cairns c Taylor b McGrath	56
C L Cairns c Taylor b McGrath	56
C L Cairns c Taylor b McGrath	56
C L Cairns c Taylor b McGrath	56
C L Cairns c Taylor b McGrath	56

Fired-up Donald makes short work of fragile India batting

SUPERB fast bowling from Allan Donald paved the way for a comprehensive South Africa victory over India, who made just 66 in their second innings in the first Test match at Kingsmead on Saturday.

South Africa won by 328 runs after Donald, who took five for 40 in India's first innings, rocked the India top order on the third day with a hostile opening spell of three for ten in six overs.

Generating extreme pace on a pitch still offering plenty of bounce, Donald, 30, finished with second-innings figures of four for 14 as India were

bowled out in 34.1 overs. Donald was well supported by Shaun Pollock, who took three for 25, and Lance Klusener, who returned figures of two for 16.

Rahul Dravid, batting confidently at No 6 for an unbeaten 27 in two hours, at least ensured that India surpassed their lowest Test total of 42 — achieved against England at Lord's in 1974.

Earlier, India had been set an improbable victory target of 395 after South Africa were bowled out for 259 in their second innings shortly before lunch. Brian McMillan fin-

ished on 51 not out, putting on 74 for the last wicket with Donald, who made 26. Venkatesh Prasad took five for 93 to finish with match figures of ten for 153.

Donald then rocked the India top order with his fiery opening burst to leave them reeling at seven for three. From that point, there was no way back for India.

"On our side, it was a case of bad batting — we should have applied ourselves a lot more and showed more determination," Sachin Tendulkar, the India captain, who made four, said. "But I think it was basically a bowlers' wicket, although batting did get better if the batsmen stayed there for a while without taking any risks."

Hansie Cronje, the South Africa captain, said: "What helped us was that we had four players who have a sound back-foot technique in Andrew Hudson, Adam Bacher, Brian McMillan and Shaun Pollock. I think we also had a slight advantage with our fast bowlers compared to their two. If Allan Donald and Shaun Pollock needed a rest, we always had Lance Klusener and Brian McMillan to bring on."

Draw seals series for under-19s

ENGLAND clinched the under-19 series against Pakistan after the third international petersed out into a draw in Lahore yesterday. Ben Hollis, who proved so important with bat and ball in the first innings, was again the pick of the England players.

The match had seemed well poised overnight with Pakistan 132 for five, but tight bowling denied them the quick runs they needed to press for victory and England finished the series 1-0 winners. Hollis ended with three for 35 from 25 overs. Gareth Batty, of Yorkshire, with three for 51 from 22 overs, was also economical. Hassan Raza's innings of 69 ensured the home side were never in danger of losing the match, though. Pakistan finally declared at 207 for nine, leaving England needing 201 from 37 overs.

Abdul Razaq sent back Stephen Peters for seven and later dismissed David Sales (12) and Andrew Flintoff (16) to end with three for 33. The fifth-wicket pair, David Nash and Hollis, held firm as the game drifted to its inevitable conclusion with England closing on 64 for four.

PARTIALLY SIGHTED, A MISSING LIMB...

...it didn't hinder Nelson and it won't stop the crew of the Time & Tide.

We are very proud to support the crew of the Time & Tide, who have overcome illness and disability to compete in the BT Global Challenge.

Congratulations on reaching Wellington, Time & Tide. Next stop — Sydney!



ZURICH INSURANCE



SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings 256 (A C Hudson 88, B K V Prasad 5 for 65)	
Second Innings	
A C Hudson c Tendulkar b Kumble	56
G Kirsten c Dravid b Prasad	55
M A Boucher c Tendulkar b Kumble	55
C L Cairns c Dravid b Prasad	17
N J Claassen c Dravid b Prasad	17
S R Waugh b McGrath	25
B M McMillan not out	51
S M Pollock c Raza b Prasad	2
J D Richardson b Prasad	4
L Klusener c McGrath b Prasad	4
A A Donald c Raza b Prasad	26
Extras (b 7, lb 6, nb 5)	26
Total	259
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-4, 2-15, 3-120, 4-122, 5-144, 6-184, 7-171, 8-181, 9-185	
BOWLING: Donald 11-4-14-4; Pollock 12-4-25-3; Klusener 9-2-16-2; McMillan 2-0-9-0	
INDIA: First Innings 100 (A Donald 5 for 40)	

SCOREBOARD

WEST INDIES: First Innings	
Second Innings	
V S Raza c Tendulkar b Donald	2
W V Raza c Donald	0
S C Ganguly b Donald	0
S R Tendulkar c Klusener b Pollock	8
M A Boucher c Klusener b Pollock	8
S R Dravid not out	27
H R Morrison c Klusener b Pollock	4
A Kumble c Klusener b Pollock	2
J D Richardson b Pollock	5
B K V Prasad c Klusener b Donald	1
Extras (b 2, nb 3)	6
Total	66
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0, 2-2, 3-7, 4-15, 5-20, 6-25, 7-40, 8-51, 9-62	
BOWLING: Donald 11-4-14-4; Pollock 12-4-25-3; Klusener 9-2-16-2; McMillan 2-0-9-0	
UNUSUAL: S Durrant (New Zealand) and D O'Connell (South Africa)	

RUGBY UNION: PRESSURE ON PLAYERS MOUNTS AS WEEKEND POSTPONEMENTS EXTEND OVERCROWDED SEASON

Pienaar is ready for cold plunge at Bath

By Bryan Stiles

THE chill factor has caught up with Francois Pienaar, the captain who inspired South Africa to World Cup triumph last year. First the South Africa selectors gave him the cold shoulder and dropped him, then wintry weather ruined the start of his great English adventure on Saturday, when he was scheduled to make his debut for Saracens against Orrell in the Courage Clubs Championship.

While the match will now have to be played in midweek, Pienaar's concern is more immediate. He claims not to have played for two months and has had only weather-hampered training with his new team-mates as preparation for his first match in England, which will now be on Saturday, away to Bath.

"I wish I could have had a run before meeting them," he said with a grin. It is the kind of challenge that Pienaar thrives on, though, and Bath are one of the quartet of clubs — the others are Leicester, Harlequins and Wasps — that Saracens aim to supersede at the top of the English pecking order.

Pienaar regards his signing for Saracens as the start of a new "adventure" for him and Nannie, his wife of ten months. "In South Africa, people take a year off after university to tour Europe," he said. "We are going to do that now ... and see shows and rock shows in London."

He dismissed stories that he had joined Saracens purely for his pay, reputed to be £200,000 a season. "I still had 18 months of my contract to run in South Africa," he said. "I could have stayed there and been a wealthy man, but I have other goals. One was to play in Europe."

Bleak midwinter exposes fixture flaws

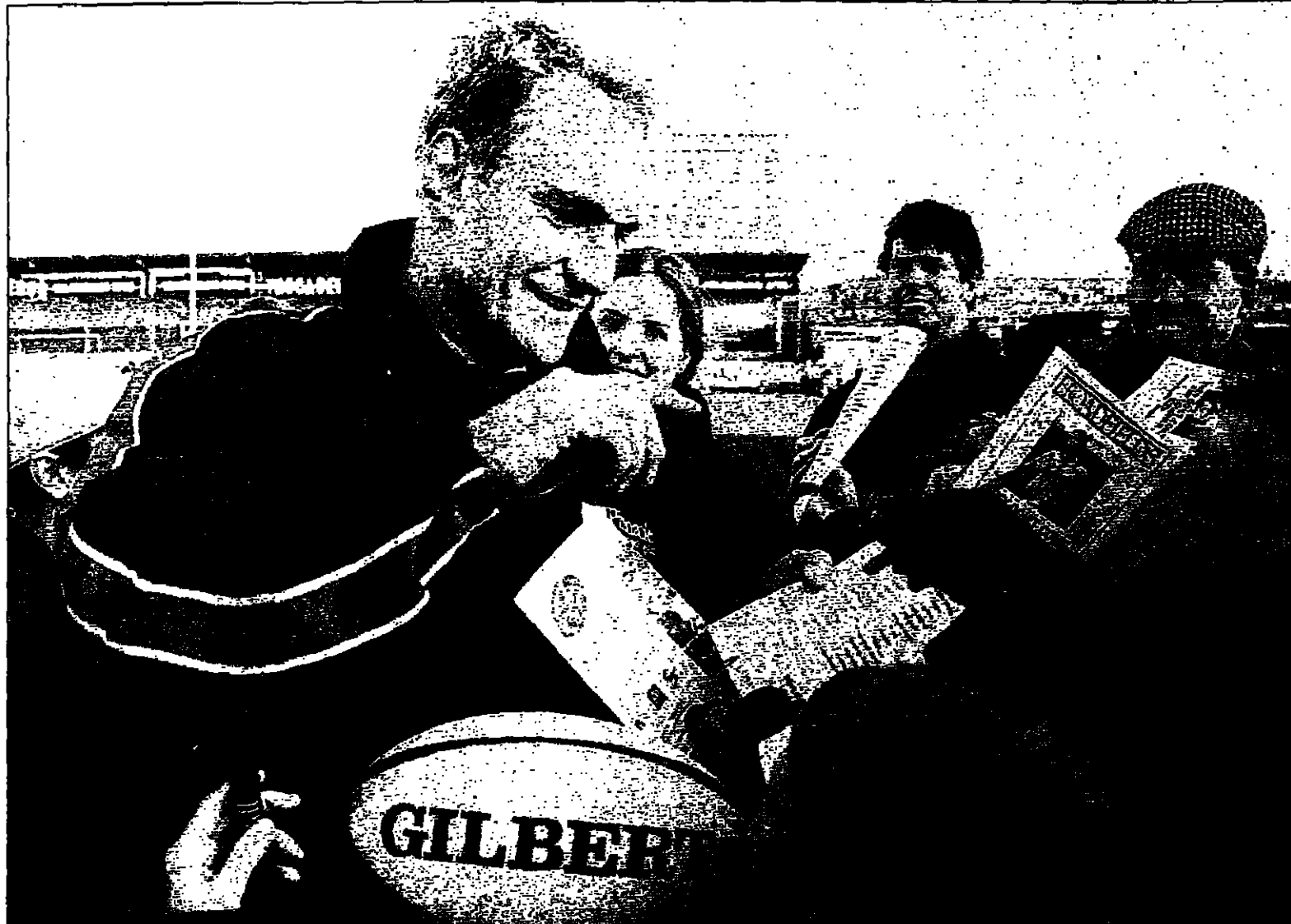
By David Hands
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THERE is a dreadful irony in the fact that Nigel Wray, the principal investor in Saracens, has been lamenting the absence of regular fixtures for his patrons at Enfield in the past two months. Given five weekends of solid club rugby, Sod's Law dictates that Saracens should be among the weekend weather casualties.

Wray was quite right to criticise a fixture-making policy that left supporters bereft of quality rugby. In his own phrase, the shop cannot be closed down when an outside agency — in this case, the Rugby Football Union — decides that representative rugby should be the norm. But, on Saturday, to the chagrin of all concerned, Francois Pienaar's introduction to English rugby was frost-bitten for less than 30 minutes before the kick-off against Orrell was due.

Yesterday, the same situation arose at Bristol and Sale: in the case of Bristol's league match with Gloucester, the storm cones were hoisted when the football match between Bristol Rovers and Millwall, due to be played at the Memorial Ground on Saturday, was postponed. Ed Morrison, the international referee, inspected the pitch yesterday morning and decided the surface was too hard, a decision which gave supporters the chance to stay at home.

Unhappily, that was not the case at either Enfield on Saturday or Sale yesterday. Thousands turned up for both games at clubs hoping that their expensive pitch-covers would ensure the game went ahead. No call was made for a local referee of appropriate stature to make an early inspection but, when Tony Spreadbury arrived at Enfield, he felt there was little option. "My back would have been on the line if I had insisted on playing," he said. "All referees are now fully aware of the over-riding importance of safety."



Pienaar keeps young autograph-hunters happy after the postponement of the game between Saracens and Orrell at Enfield.

So are Saracens. It was on their ground that Ian Tucker, the Oxford University student, met the playing accident that caused his death in October. The courts have made referees aware of what can happen if regulations are ignored, after the Ben Smoldon case, and bad weather creates one more concern for player safety. At least John Pearson, at Sale, where Bath were the visitors, did not have to emulate Spreadbury because the re-

spective captains agreed at 12.45pm that the pitch was too dangerous.

Saracens' embarrassment, as they made refunds to disgruntled spectators, may have been increased by the fact that matches in London, at Richmond, Harlequins, London Irish and Wasps, went ahead. But this is a situation which the professional football clubs have faced for years and for which rugby union must allow.

There is certain to be a cluttered end to this season, just when players selected to tour with the British Isles are hoping to rest and when vital promotion and relegation issues are being decided. Only three first-division clubs have played all ten scheduled matches and there may well be more bad weather to come.

Some clubs may be able to play on February 22, so long as they are not involved in the Pilkington Cup quarter-finals that day, but a full league programme is already scheduled for March 29, the date of the cup semi-finals. The league season does not end until May 3 but the season itself drags on to May 17, with the Sanyo Cup match between the English club champions and a world XV, so notionally matches could be played on May 10 (Cup Final day) or May 17, by which time the Lions are due to depart for South Africa.

Midweek games seem inevitable but the gates they will attract are unlikely to match those at weekends, so clubs who have already lost revenue at overnight stays may lose more when games are rearranged. Discussions will take place today over suitable dates and clubs will be instructed when postponed league games should be played; they have the right of appeal and nothing is more certain than that few clubs will be happy.

Calum MacGregor converted both well and made it three out of three two minutes before the break after David McLeish, at No.8, picked up and drove over from a five-metre scrum.

Parker's penalty goal got Borders on the scoreboard and two more successful strikes raised their hopes of a revival. After MacGregor's first penalty success, Bryan Redpath's half-break from a close-range scrum put Stewart Bennet, the flanker, in for his side's first try. However, Craig's second try, when he used his pace to latch on to a clever chip by Andy Garry, re-established a cushion for Glasgow.

The result was put out of sight with ten minutes to go by another excellent piece of work from Garry. He received the ball six metres out, committed the defence, then worked the ball clear to release Logan.

Rob Bainwright, the Scotland captain last season, enjoyed a satisfactory comeback at representative level as Caledonia set up a title decider against Glasgow next week with a 31-13 victory over Edinburgh in the second match.

SCORES: Glasgow: Try: K Logan (2), C Craig (2), D McLeish (2), Conversion: C MacGregor (4). Penalty goal: C MacGregor (1). Borders: Try: S Bennet (1), Conversion: S Bennet (1). Caledonia: Try: P Redpath (1), Conversion: P Redpath (1). Perth: Try: N Shearer (1), Conversion: N Shearer (1). Edinburgh: Try: C Gifford (1), Conversion: C Gifford (1). Glasgow: Try: K Logan (2), C Craig (2), D McLeish (2), Conversion: C MacGregor (4). Penalty goal: C MacGregor (1). Borders: Try: S Bennet (1), Conversion: S Bennet (1). Caledonia: Try: P Redpath (1), Conversion: P Redpath (1). Perth: Try: N Shearer (1), Conversion: N Shearer (1). Edinburgh: Try: C Gifford (1), Conversion: C Gifford (1).

SCORES: Glasgow: Try: K Logan (2), C Craig (2), D McLeish (2), Conversion: C MacGregor (4). Penalty goal: C MacGregor (1). Borders: Try: S Bennet (1), Conversion: S Bennet (1). Caledonia: Try: P Redpath (1), Conversion: P Redpath (1). Perth: Try: N Shearer (1), Conversion: N Shearer (1). Edinburgh: Try: C Gifford (1), Conversion: C Gifford (1).

Richmond power play keeps them on song for promotion

Richmond.....39
Coventry.....10

By Nicolas Andrews

HALFWAY through the season and, while the Richmond public address system is still confining its use of Roy Orbison's *I's Over* to celebrations of Simon Mason's goal-kicking, it will surely not be long before the sentiments apply equally accurately to the team's inexorable pursuit of promotion. Richmond are the only unbeaten team in the top three divisions of the Courage Clubs Championship.

Two more victories — away to Rotherham and at home to Bedford — and it will take a Devon Loch-style stumble down the home straight to keep Ashley Levett's all-stars out of the first division next season.

"We've got a long way to go and there are 20 points still to play for," John Kingston, the Richmond director of rugby, said after this five-try victory at the Athletic Ground on Saturday. Indeed, Coventry have not given up the chase and Derek Eves, their player-coach, predicts "a few funny results" before the season's end. But, if anything, it is the second promotion place that is up for grabs.

The perception has been that the Rugby Football Union moved the goalposts once again when announcing recently that there would be no play-offs, that two teams would go up and four come down. However, the news came as no surprise to Richmond. The club had been pressing for the confirmation of a decision first agreed by the RFU last May. Subsequent confusion caused by the desire of some to give Gloucester, Bristol or

whoever another chance to avoid the pace and power of Bateman, Fallon *et al* behind them, that did for Coventry. The Richmond three-quarters attacked from deep, the recycling was swift, the passing sure.

Trues in the 31st and 33rd minutes warmed the crowd and put Coventry on the back foot after a bright start, in which Harris kicked a dropped goal. Clarke went over from a forward drive, then Brown outstripped the defence from halfway.

The irrepressible Eves spurred his men forward after the break but Boyd's touchdown at the end of another move begun deep in Richmond territory ensured that it would be to no avail. Smallwood was the scorer of a deserved Coventry try, but two tries for the rampaging Scott Quinnell added lustre to the Richmond scoreline.

Coventry are a very similar side to

the one that started the season. In fact, all 15 players who appeared that day were on duty again on Saturday and this consistency is one factor in a season of considerable progress.

"We have come a long way in a short time," Eves said. "Today, we dropped the ball too often, and you can't do that against the best, but we have now got the money in place to buy. We are still six or seven months behind Richmond, but we have got a lot of spirit and we will be back."

SCORES: Richmond: Try: S Quinnell (2), Clarke, Brown, Boyd, Conversion: Mason (4). Penalty goal: Mason (2). Coventry: Try: Smallwood (1), Conversion: Harris (1). Dropped goal: Harris (1). ROTHERHAM: S Mason (1), F Fallon, A Bateman, M Hutton, S Brown, A Boyd, A Moore, C Clark, B Moore, D Crompton, B Davies, C Quinnell, R West, A Vender, S Quinnell. Brown replaced by B Smith (30min).

COVENTRY: W Kirkord, D John, M Gallagher, R Robinson, A Smallwood, J Harris, A Dawson, P Hardwick, D Addison, M Crane, L Crofts, D Greenwood, A Blackmore, D Eves, I Patten, Crofts replaced by J Harrold (50). Referee: S Pacey (Yorkshire).

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SCORES: Richmond: Try: S Quinnell (2), Clarke, Brown, Boyd, Conversion: Mason (4). Penalty goal: Mason (2). Coventry: Try: Smallwood (1), Conversion: Harris (1). Dropped goal: Harris (1). ROTHERHAM: S Mason (1), F Fallon, A Bateman, M Hutton, S Brown, A Boyd, A Moore, C Clark, B Moore, D Crompton, B Davies, C Quinnell, R West, A Vender, S Quinnell. Brown replaced by B Smith (30min).

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Scott Quinnell: two tries

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Swansea suspend Newport revival

Newport.....17
Swansea.....42

By Mark Souster

IT WAS not that long ago that David Watkins, the Newport chairman, said he would never attempt to buy success or pay his players. For one thing, Newport could not afford it; for another, Watkins felt that pride in the club jersey should be motivation enough. How times have changed, and how Newport have been forced to move with them.

Now the club is to appoint a full-time director of rugby and a new chief executive; there is talk of turning into a limited company and even going public to finance the future. Gareth Rees has come and gone but Rod Snow, another Canada international, has arrived at Rodney Parade. Mix in Jan Machacek, a Czech international, and a couple of Australians, and Newport's future looks distinctly healthier.

However, despite their recent revival, Newport on Saturday were no match for a Swansea side that contained 11 internationals. Even though the All Whites have found it difficult to reproduce their free-wheeling antics away from St Helen's, two more bonus points were pounced at Rodney Parade to keep them top of the Welsh League first division.

Leading 27-10 at half-time, but for Arwel Thomas's dreadful place kicking — he converted only one of eight kicks at goal — Swansea would have been out of sight. They had been content to keep the game tight, with their forwards contributing seven tries in all, and only occasionally did their

backs offer glimpses of their pace and ability. Newport's never did, primarily because the possession they won was immediately driven back to the forwards, where Swansea repeatedly turned them over.

Where Swansea really had the acres was in their international back row of Reynolds, Paul Moriarty and Charvis. Comfortable with the ball in hand, they combined well as a unit and Charvis, who will surely add to his two caps in the five nations' championship, was a prominent figure in many of Swansea's brighter moments. He created Alan Harris's try and galloped 40 metres for his own score through a defence which parted invitingly for him.

Reynolds it was who stopped Newport's threatened comeback. His brave tackle on Chris Smith prevented a certain try after Nicky Lloyd had broken from his own 22 before releasing his wing.

A try then would have brought Newport to within three points of their opponents, after Ian Jones had run through a sleepy Swansea defence on the stroke of half-time and Mark Workman had capitalised on Lloyd's blind-side break soon afterwards. Reynolds was injured making the tackle and retired hurt, but his duty had been done.

SCORES: Newport: Try: Jones, Workman, Conversion: Connor (2). Penalty goal: Connor (1). Swansea: Try: Lloyd (2), Booth (2), Harris, Moore, Charvis, Jenkins, Conversion: Thomas (4). NEWPORT: A Harrison, C Smith, B Connor, J Goldeney, M Lewis, S Connor, N Lloyd, R Snow, J Jones, S Garry, S Taylor, R Gledhill, I Gough, M Workman, J Machacek. Gough replaced by P Gannon (50min). Connor replaced by D Smith (70). SWANSEA: M Bach, A Harris, M Taylor, S Gledhill, S Davies, A Thomas, A Booth, G Leader, G Jenkins, C Anthony, A Reynolds, S Moore, P Arnold, C Charvis, P Moriarty. Reynolds replaced by D Webb (55). Referee: G Symonds (Cardiff).

Undervalued Pontypridd display homespun virtues

Cardiff.....23
Pontypridd.....37

By Gerald Davies

IF WATCHING Cardiff is a frustrating experience — with no member, however ardent, confident of knowing what to expect from one week to the next — to follow Pontypridd can, by contrast, bring consistent reward. They rarely play badly.

Cardiff, with a dressing-room full of international players, will often disappoint, but Pontypridd, with only Neil Jenkins and the newly-capped Rowley to boast about, seem always to live up to their hard-earned reputation. Pontypridd deliver the goods, as they say, game after game. Yet they are rarely rewarded in the way they should be.

In the Heineken Cup they were the only team to collect six points from their pool matches and yet not reach the quarter-finals. In recent years they have challenged hard to win the league but have been pipped at the post.

They may feel hard done by already this season. They are in second position, behind Swansea, yet have won ten of their 11 games whereas Swansea have only won eight of theirs and are top by virtue of the bonus points they have collected.

This could leave Pontypridd sickeningly disconsolate. But they are not. Not if their present form is anything to go by. In this match, which drew 17,000, having been transferred to the National Stadium, they recorded their highest score against Cardiff and their second win of the season against them.

Their first score may have resulted from the ease with which referees are apt nowadays to present seven points by awarding a penalty try, but the three tries they scored in the second half were a far better indication of the manner in which they play their rugby.

Jonathan Davies had kicked a penalty after five minutes, during a period in which the home team could well have crossed the line for two tries, and the visitors were hardly in the contest. On their first close contact with the Cardiff line in



Jenkins dictated play

the eleventh minute, they twice came near to scoring but were held up on the line. On the second occasion, Cardiff's three-quarters were adjudged offside, with the referee ruling that a try would "probably" have been scored.

With such a crowded defence, his interpretation of "probably" was generous. Such a gift of seven points was taking the festive mood too far, Jonathan Davies and Neil Jenkins kicked a penalty each

before Davies stopped a kick by Jenkins on the Pontypridd 22-metre line and then hacked the ball the rest of the way for a try which he also converted to give his side the half-time lead.

This was Cardiff's high point. Thereafter, they committed too many errors. Too many bad passes were made and too many of the decent ones were dropped.

Jenkins then took control. As always in his club colours, he is a superb strategist. He kicked, he ran, he passed accurately. Whatever he did was beautifully timed.

First, he kicked two penalties to take his team into the lead. His passing brought the best out of Jason Lewis, who persistently exposed Cardiff's midfield defence, and it was he who made the telling break which gave Paul John his try.

Then Jenkins ran to carve an opening which gave Lewis his try. It was Jenkins's vision also which gave Geraint Lewis the gap for Manley's try. Needless to say, Jenkins converted all three scores. It was a first-class performance.

A late surge by Cardiff gave Justin Thomas a try which Davies converted, but they will need to improve considerably next weekend when they carry Wales's banner into Europe when they visit Brive. SCORES: Cardiff: Try: J Davies, Conversion: J Davies (2). Penalty goal: J Davies (1). Pontypridd: Try: N Jenkins (1), Conversion: N Jenkins (1). ROTHERHAM: S Mason (1), F Fallon, A Bateman, M Hutton, S Brown, A Boyd, A Moore, C Clark, B Moore, D Crompton, B Davies, C Quinnell, R West, A Vender, S Quinnell. Brown replaced by B Smith (30min).

COVENTRY: W Kirkord, D John, M Gallagher, R Robinson, A Smallwood, J Harris, A Dawson, P Hardwick, D Addison, M Crane, L Crofts, D Greenwood, A Blackmore, D Eves, I Patten, Crofts replaced by J Harrold (50). Referee: S Pacey (Yorkshire).

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Irish and We
into twilight

Leicester inspire Greenwood to take centre stage

BY DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

in terms of pace of life

Underwood has not enjoyed demotion this season, from either club or country, yet he has handled the unusual situation professionally. He has given the benefit of his considerable experience to the young Lloyd (would an English coach, I wonder, have risked converting an inexperienced wing to centre against the likes of Connolly and Carling?) but,

SCORERS: Harlequins: Triest; Hares: (2) Conventry: Chalfont; Pers: govt. Flgrim, Chalfont, Lakeland; Triest: Underwood (2), Lily, Greenwood. Conventry: Lily; Persley goats: Lily (4).

HARLEQUINS: S Pugin; D O'Leary, G Connolly, W Carling, S Bromley; P Chalfont, H Hamble, L Biedtisch, K Wood, J Jossent, J Pugh, J Gurney, Garchi, Jersley, J Davidson, L Coleman. Llewellyn replaced by F Pickup (Rhini).

LEICESTER: J Lily; S Hackney, L Lloyd, W Greenwood, R Underwood, N Melana, A Hsley; G Rowntree, R Cooles, D Berrington, J Moss, M Johnson, M Potts, B Wells, J Miller. Wells replaced by W Johnson (45).

Referee: B Cammell (Yorkshire).

Underwood leaves the defence trailing during an impressive return in which he claimed two tries for Leicester.

By DAVID HANDS

Fylde cemented their place at the top of the third division by beating Leeds 13-0, a match notable for the dismissal of Nick Green, the Leeds player, for a stamping offence.

BY BARNEY SPENDER

West, who again delayed Liam

SCORERS: London Irish: Trias: Walsh (2), Davidson, Bishop, O'Shea, Henderson. Conversions: Henderson (2), Bishop (2), Davidson (2), Walsh (2). West Hants: Trias: Morgan, Stabler, Connolly. Conversions: Stabler (2). Penalty goals: Stabler (4).

LONDON IRISH: C O'Shea; N Woods, R Henderson, S Burns, J Bishop; D Humphreys, P Richards; L Mooney, R Kellam, G Heslin, K O'Connell, G Fulcher, J Davidson, K Dawson, B Walsh. Davidson scored by V Costello (15min); Bishop scored by R Hennessy (22); O'Shea scored by J Fitzpatrick (22).

WEST HANTS: M Silve; M Wood, J Connolly, S John, G Cordell; J Stabler, M Rodenick; W de Jonge, A Percoco, P Whitesell, J Ions, G Murphy, K Mossley, R Earnshaw, J Morgan. Ions replaced by J Manton (30); Cordell replaced by K O'Leary (55).

Referee: C White (Gloucestershire).

BY JOHN HOPKINS

"Building a team is a long-term

The worry of McGeechan, the coach of the British Isles touring team to South Africa next summer, is that the spectators will not continue to be attracted to the game unless the standards continue to improve. "If you ain't got a product worth watching, then in two years' time we

This game was typical of many of the modern era. It was full of bad handling, bad passing and bad refereeing, and yet it was entertaining for the 5,000 spectators. They might not have been as warm as the pitch with its undersoil heating, but the level of commitment in front of them made sure they were not in danger of freezing to death.

SCORES: Wasps: Penalty goals: Rees (6)
 Northampton: Try: Chandler. Conversion: Grayson.
 Penalty goals: Grayson (2)
WASPS: G Rees, S Flower, N Greenstock, A James, V
 Tugemele, A King, A Gomersall, C Craff, S
 Williams, G Green, L Dallaglio, D Cronin, A Rieatt.
 Walsley: C Stacey. Replaced by D Molloy
 (57min). Cronin replaced by R Kinsey (57). Mitchell
 replaced by D Mezer (80).
NORTHAMPTON: N Book, I Hunter, M Allen, R
 MacNaughton, H Thomeycroft, P Grayson, D Malone.
 M Vollard, A Clarke, G Walsh, S Taitup, J Philips, J
 Chandler, A Pounfrey, T Rodder. Rodder replaced by
 J Cessell (80)

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Tuigamala, left, of Wasps, fends off Nick Beal, of Northampton

David Miller continues a series in which *Times* writers recall the best of 1996

Day Sampras served up helping of true grit

CROWNING GLORY

Either or both of two essential qualities go towards making the winner. There are, of course, others: luck; temperament or stamina; often experience, sometimes a need for revenge; occasionally a sheer flash of anger, always practice. More usually, however, it comes down to exceptional ability and that rarer, indefinable quality — the iron in a competitor's spirit.

A few have both. Daley Thompson, for example, and Jack Nicklaus. Fred Perry and Denis Law had both. So did Herb Elliott and Ayrton Senna, so does Steve Redgrave. Nick Faldo, on the other hand, has been more conspicuous for the second quality than the first. What might be called the Rock of Gibraltar factor. It is a factor common to many female winners: Chris Evert, Mary Peters, Grete Waitz, Virginia Leng, and the new double Olympic champion from Russia, Svetlana Masterkova.

Trying to define the soul of different champions is an endlessly elusive exercise. The past year, including the Olympic Games in Atlanta, has seen many excel. Carl Lewis joined Redgrave as gold medal-winner in a fourth Games, stealing some of the thunder from that younger Achilles, Michael Johnson.

Yet if we are looking for iron in the soul, for action that tells us most about the inner man, the supreme figure of 1996 has been Pete Sampras. He touched the emotions during the US Open championships in a way few, if any, have done since Gabriel Andersson-Scheiss in 1984, when staggering semi-conscious towards the finishing line of the first women's Olympic marathon.

By Sampras's personal standard, 1996 was, perhaps, not a great year. It began with him still



Sick and groggy, Sampras refuses to yield, battling on to beat the Spaniard, Corretja, in the US Open championship. Photograph: Blake Sell

weary from the previous season, which had ended with his substantial contribution to the Davis Cup final victory over Russia. In the French Open and Wimbledon championships, he had flagged. Here, supposedly, was evidence of a player whose body, if not his mind, was all played out — by his previous seven grand-slam titles, by his 36 career titles, which had already earned him in excess of \$22 million (about £13.5 million) in prize-money.

There was the feeling that he no longer needed the challenge, that,

at 25, he was already burnt out. How we were to be proved wrong. Jump ahead of the story. Sampras was to demonstrate, for the second time in three months, his refusal to surrender when he defeated Boris Becker in an enthralling final of the world championships of the Association of Tennis Professionals in Hanover in November. Becker, belying his age at 29, had already won their round-robin meeting at this event. He was set for a stirring climax in front of 15,000 Germans when coming from two sets to one down

to win a fourth-set tie-break 13-11 — only then to succumb in the fifth set.

That tie-break was a whole match on its own: 13 points against service, two match points for Sampras — both lost on rallies — and four set points for Becker before he secured the fifth.

TOMORROW

Rob Hughes recalls special moments that revealed the eternal passion for football

Yet if Sampras's courage then was something special, it did not compare with what had occurred on a sultry night in the crucible of Flushing Meadows in a quarter-final against the unheralded Alex Corretja, of Spain, a 22-year-old never previously at this stage of any grand-slam event.

If I live to be 100 I do not expect to witness a braver performance than that by Sampras in the fifth-set tie-break, his vision blurred and his knees buckling as he vomited uncontrollably from exhaustion, yet refused to yield. If

had been a sterling performance by Corretja, ranked 31 in the world, who had set point in every set and now had match point in the riveting climax. It could be said that luck smiled upon Sampras as he tottered close to collapse: a double fault by Corretja on Sampras's second match point. Yet Corretja, too, had been pushed beyond the limits of concentration.

For more than four hours, he had traded aces with Sampras — 25 apiece — and had shaken him when taking a 2-1 sets lead. In the fourth set, Sampras had found a

'He touched the emotions in the US Open in a way few have done'

window for a way out of jail, a single, brilliant, half-volley drop shot for a service break that enabled him to level the match.

Entering the final set, Corretja, critically, had the odd game service lead: 1-0, 2-1, 3-2, inching his way towards improbable triumph. Trailing 5-4 and serving to save the match, Sampras first took a medical break in the locker-room, changing clothes and returning looking like someone entering the emergency ward. He held his service, but so did Corretja for 6-5. Somehow Sampras clung on for 6-6, forcing the fifth-set tie break, that ultimate in ball-game Russian roulette. At 1-1, Sampras stooped, clutching his stomach, and was sick, though his stomach was empty.

Had Sampras at this moment walked away from the match, conceding defeat by retirement, none would have condemned him. His distress was too stark: to continue was beyond the call of duty. I have seen occasional British players fold under one-fifth of such pressure, and Ryder Cup players in golf who have preferred voluntary capitulation to the possible, worse, pain of reaching for victory and still failing. Sampras now continued to stretch out an ailing arm.

At 5-5, a smash brought him match point, but he lost successive points, to go match point down. The 20,000 crowd was held in breathless awe as Corretja served for the kill. Sampras returned, Corretja hit a cross-court forehand and Sampras, lunging as though grasping for the handle of life itself, struck a blind, winning volley.

Still in nausea, Sampras served for 8-7. Corretja, trembling at the magnitude of his position, double faulted. Victor and vanquished, with barely the strength to shake hands, stood equal in honour on this memorable night.

Foster tackles cost of career cover

The cost of a career-ending tackle for a low-division footballer is about £250,000. That is the estimate of how much Brian McCord was awarded in damages in the High Court a few days before Christmas.

McCord, whose right leg was broken in March 1993 when he was playing for Stockport County against Swanswick City, said after the case that he had had to live on Income Support since his injury. Risk is present throughout the season, but the hard grounds of winter add to the dangers.

For 22 years, Steve Foster provided defensive cover for club and country. The end of last season marked his retirement as a player, but he will still be providing cover for hundreds of fellow professionals.

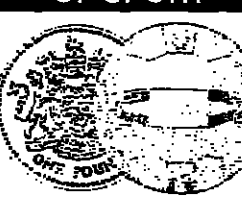
The former Brighton and Hove Albion captain has resisted the temptation to go into management and instead he, and a squad of former players, hope to sign up as many of those still in the game as possible and help them to manage the risks that threaten their careers.

Foster runs Pro-Secure, an insurance business to protect footballers from the sort of injury that can bring a promising career to a premature end. Gary Stevens, a one-time Brighton colleague, is one of those selling Foster's policies. Foster said: "I [Stevens] broke his leg and had to play on for a year because he had no cover."

Foster was not an obvious candidate to tackle the intricacies of policies and premiums. "When I was a young player, if anyone came in to talk about insurance or pensions, I'd make an excuse to go to the toilet and dive out of the window," he said. "I became Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) rep here about three years ago for the first time in my whole career. I got voted in when I had a day off."

There was a young man who got his leg broken very badly. He could never play again. My job was to see what was on offer. He got £250,000 from the PFA through insurance. I looked into what policies there were and realised I'd been playing for 20 years without insurance and realised that what there was was inadequate."

THE BUSINESS OF SPORT



Clubs had policies to protect their investments in players and to pay transfer fees for replacements, but players themselves had little or no entitlement to anything.

Having found a broker and a Lloyd's underwriter, Foster said: "I started off targeting all the younger players, who I felt were the ones to look after, taking policies out for £50,000. This level of cover costs about £10 a week, he said, and would give them an income for a couple of years."

Foster has now turned his attention towards the established professional earning perhaps £200,000 to £300,000 a year. He offers policies that pay out up to £1 million, for a premium of about £200 a week, and can arrange cover for up to £5 million.

About 85 per cent of footballers are "running about without insurance" Foster said, although incidents like the one in which David Buss, of Coventry City, broke his leg remind players that their careers can be short.

Murdo Mackay, Buss's agent, said that the player, who worked for an insurance company before becoming a professional footballer, did have cover. "When players come into the game, the last thing on their mind is a serious injury or a career-threatening injury," Mackay said.

With hindsight, he added, the policy would have guaranteed a higher level of payout in the event of Buss being unable to play again. Mackay said: "Coventry City have indicated that they will look after the player. But with a footballer dependent on the goodwill of his club, the agent wants an appropriate level of cover to be provided as part of a player's contract. "With David's recent injury, I'm looking at this area with some urgency."

FRANK LE DUC

Steeled for cut and thrust of life

By JOHN GOODBODY

BARELY more than a sword's thrust away from the stage of the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford upon Avon, is one of the most productive cradles of fencing in Britain.

Few academic institutions possess such a concentration of young talent in any Olympic sport as King Edward VI School. Renowned principally for its intellectual excellence and its medieval timbered buildings, where Shakespeare is believed to have studied, the school has established a distinction for proficiency in the sabre during the past decade.

David Kirby, the coach, partially accepts the premise that fencing is an activity that attracts intellectuals. "Although it requires the intelligence of the streetwise, a fencer has to process an enormous amount of information very quickly."

The sabre is the event at which Britain has generally been the least prominent in international competitions. Kirby believes that it is more dramatic than either foil or epee, which are thrusting weapons, rather than sabre in which hits can be scored with the side of the blade. "The sabre is swashbuckling. It looks and feels like a real sword. That is the attraction for young boys." Of the 432 pupils at the boys-only grammar school, about 50 fence seriously and the decision to concentrate on the sabre was made three years ago.

Kirby said: "We used to practise all three weapons. However, I realised that the

standard that we were achieving was too high for one person to coach at all three. We had not the time nor the resources — so the boys and I decided to concentrate on sabre."

The results have been startling. In the Munich tournament last month, one of the three under-17 European events from which competitors are selected for the 1997 world cadet championships, the two leading Britons, Mike Johnson, who finished 23rd, and Simon Whitbread, 27th, were both from King Edward VI School. In the British individual youth championships the same month, two other members of the squad, Tom Croft and Hugh Jackson, took the under-18 and under-16 titles.

Johnson, 38th in the 1996 world under-17 championships when he was only 15, has

SPORT IN SCHOOLS

been fencing since he came to the school at the age of 11. "The sport is not purely aggression, fitness, or technique. It is a combination. You need the balance," he said.

He was attracted by the sabre. "It is more aggressive and much quicker. You do not get so much closing opponents down. In the other weapons, you are looking for smaller openings."

ROLAND LEON



Whitbread, right, and Johnson, two of the leading Britons, cross swords, while Joyes watches the action

NETBALL: BASKET OF MEASURES WILL HELP TO CULTIVATE YOUNG PLAYERS

New strategy opens way for future stars

By LOUISE TAYLOR

THERE may be some truth in the adage that sportsmen and women are born rather than made but it still takes a minimum of six years to develop the complete netballer to polish a player capable of competing with the world's best. Recognising this, the All England Netball Association (AENA) is taking a close look at youth development.

The upshot is an embryo strategy that outlines ways of increasing and improving the quality of opportunities for young netballers. Covering umpiring, coaching and ad-

ministration, it emphasises the need for clubs and leagues to liaise with local authorities, schools and colleges.

Acknowledging that the days when coaches simply passed on techniques learnt during a PE teacher-training course years earlier are long gone, AENA stresses that coaches today require detailed, up-to-date, information on a kaleidoscope of topics including diet, fitness, mental preparation and anatomical mechanics.

Leading netballers demand assistance from sports scientists and AENA has a team of specialists employed to work

with the national English squads on a sports-science support programme, based at Manchester Metropolitan University.

At a time when there is increasing discussion about the development of British sporting excellence, and more money than ever seems available for investment, netball is not intending to be left behind.

AENA has drawn up a national performance strategy that will enable the sort of back-up available in Manchester to percolate down to netball's youth development roots, creating vastly enhanced support for the most

promising young players and their coaches.

Designed to minimise the hit-and-miss approach to talent-spotting, the idea is that all young netballers should be allowed to develop according to nationally agreed and scientifically implemented guidelines.

As Pauline Harrison, AENA's national director of coaching, said: "The youngster in your junior team may well be an England player of the future. It is only by taking these opportunities and making the very best of what is on offer that we can really be sure of achieving excellence."

CYCLING

Early attack puts Clarke in control

By PETER BRYAN

BARRIE CLARKE, in his first winter season as a full-time professional, used his bike-handling skills to good advantage yesterday to win the Royal Bank of Scotland cyclo-cross on an icy circuit and in a snowfall at Macclesfield.

The result, with Clarke leading home his fellow internationals, Tim Gould and Carl Sturgeon, by more than a minute, confirmed his recent good form and makes him favourite to regain the professional championship next month.

Nick Craig, the British Open Champion, was at yesterday's 15-mile event but elected not to compete because of a cold, otherwise Clarke might have been more closely challenged. Gould, following his clear victory in the previous day's Notts and Derby league race, was left as the obvious dangerman but, when Clarke put in a determined attack on a slight climb after three miles, Gould found his legs wanting.

"Once I was clear, I was able to concentrate better on the course difficulties," Clarke said. "Some of the corners, with a lot of ice about, were particularly slippery."

Although alone in the lead, he still had several tense moments in lapping the race stragglers on narrow stretches of the course, one of whom was his partner, Britain's leading mountain biker, Caroline Alexander, who went on to win the women's event.

On present form, Clarke, who mixes a programme of cyclo-cross and leading mountain bike races, looks set for a place in Britain's elite squad to compete in the world cyclo-cross championship in Munich on February 2.

The Walker brothers, Harry and Brian, finished first and second in the Elmet CRC ten-mile time-trial near Tadcaster when both of them used the same bike, based on the Graeme Obree design to give a "skd" position. Brian, the fifth rider to start, completed the course in 21min 55sec and handed the bike to his brother, off number 35, who went on to record the fastest time of 21min 19sec.

HOCKEY

South West sights on title double

By SYDNEY FRISKIN

THE no-offside rule in the junior divisional tournament was exploited to the full yesterday, with high scores marking the end of the second day of the event, played at Clifton College, Bristol.

South West rounded off the proceedings with a resounding 6-1 victory over South East, after leading 2-1 at half-time. Of the four goals scored in the second half, two were struck with the reverse of the stick by Johnny Loose.

This victory put South West in a strong position to win the under-17 title, but Midlands, who defeated West 3-0, also at the end of the day, have a chance. All three goals for Midlands were directly scored from short corners by Adam Ross, Matthew Taylor and David Hutton.

South West could also take the under-15 title if they earn full points from North East, who have not yet won a match. After winning their three previous encounters, South West were held to an exciting 1-1 draw by South East, who were kept in the match by their goalkeeper, Keir Starley, who made several diving saves.

James Webber scored early in the first half for South West, who allowed several chances to slip away. South East raised their game in the second half and Jonathan Stiff equalised.

A 5-3 win against the Cheam First XI was another link in the long chain of successes by the Cheam President's XI in the annual Dick Hollands memorial match at North Cheam on Saturday.

In the 25 years that Tony Bennett has run this event, his president's team has lost only five times. The last occasion was in 1984, when they went down 4-3.

For a brief spell midway in the second half of the match on Saturday, the president's men had cause for concern when their lead was cut to 3-2, but Molloy and Knapp pushed victory beyond the reach of the club team with late goals.

In a fast and free-flowing match, Molloy scored three goals for the president's team and Knapp two. All three for Cheam were scored by the centre forward, Millbourn, who combined well with Martin at inside right.

John Goodbody meets two runners who took control of their lives to meet the challenge of a lifetime

Go that extra mile to fight the flab



Christopher Loveday, above left, lost 84lb in weight during his preparation for the 1995 London Marathon. Patsy Carr went from couch potato to runner and, above, finished the 1996 London Marathon with friend Margaret Sherry



The best new year's resolution for any runner in the Flora London Marathon is to train steadily, eat sensibly and focus on the start-line in Greenwich on April 13.

With barely 3½ months to go before the 1997 race, many of the accepted entries are preparing to do what they would never have believed was possible — to run 26 miles 385 yards.

The marathon attracts elite

competitors, club runners, keep-fit enthusiasts and even unfit enthusiasts, thousands of men and women who will remember for the rest of their lives how they took up the challenge of completing the mythic distance. Many have used the race as a stimulus to their determination to keep fit and healthy, and, above all, get greater satisfaction from their lives.

Several have had to overcome the disadvantage of

being overweight. However, they have become so enthralled by the activity and benefits of running that losing weight is just one of its delights.

Christopher Loveday, 45, who runs his family's agricultural auctioneering business in Swindon, and Patsy Carr, 46, a mother-of-three and an employee of WeightWatchers in Liverpool, are typical. Their lives and bodies have been transformed by the experience

of training for the London Marathon.

Mrs Carr was scarcely active at school. "I had a go at everything but really only took any exercise when we were forced to do so." She married at 18 and had three children, all of whom are now adults.

The demands of family and work meant that she had even more excuses to be inactive. "I always was a couch potato. I was a junk-food addict." Her weight went up to 18st.

By 1991, she had had enough. She began to diet and lost 42lb. She joined WeightWatchers in 1993. "I needed sensible eating and control." She then started to exercise at a gymnasium. "I had a go at everything. I became interested in the running machine, although I was so unfit that after five minutes I nearly fell off."

Gradually she built up the training until she could manage 20 minutes. Margaret Sherry, her training partner, then suggested they should run outside.

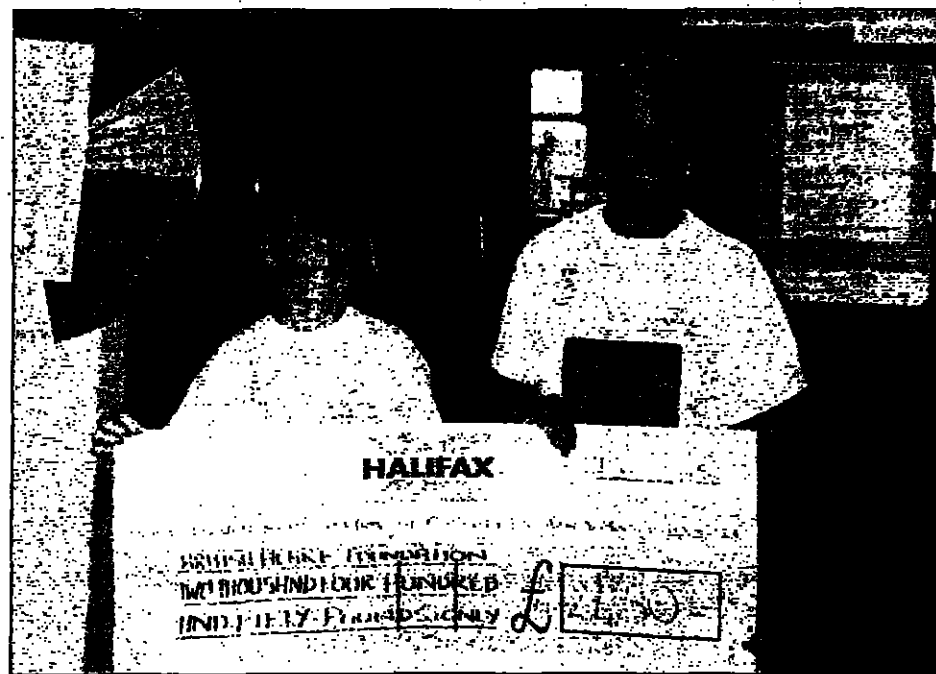
"I said that I didn't fancy it. It was raining. It was cold. But when I got outside I couldn't believe the difference from a gym. The wind was so fresh and the atmosphere was so different. I had actually started running."

By then she was down to 12st. Soon the idea of entering events attracted her. She completed two half marathons and then became one of the fund-raising runners for the British Heart Foundation in the 1996 London Marathon.

"I had always watched the race on television, but had always thought the runners were in a different league from me. They were the healthy people. They were in control of themselves. However, now I wanted to be in control of myself."

By now she was down to 10st and the prospect of raising an impressive £2,400 by combining with Mrs Sherry was an extra incentive. She completed the distance in 5 hours 35 minutes 33 seconds.

She said: "I am like a tortoise, but I keep going. So



Patsy Carr, right, and Margaret Sherry with their cheque for charity



SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

This hand is an example of the use of suit-preference signals in No-Trumps. The declarer was Graham Kirby, devoted family man and good egg, playing in the Nottinghamshire teams.

Dealer North	Game all	IMP's
♠9742 ♥J43 ♦J3 ♣Q972		
♠K63 ♥Q10986 ♦86 ♣K103	♠A J 8 5 ♥K 7 ♦10 9 5 4 ♣8 6 4	
♠Q10 ♥A 8 2 ♦A K Q 7 2 ♣A J 5		

Contract: 3 NT.

Lead: ten of hearts

After two passes Kirby opened 2 NT (20-22) and North raised to 3 NT. Kirby played low from dummy on the heart lead and won in hand with the ace. That was good play: if he ducks two rounds of hearts the defence will probably find out in time that declarer has strong diamonds, and so will cash their spades.

Now, how should declarer continue? There is a genuine line, to play a diamond to the jack and a club towards the jack, hoping East has king singleton or doubleton of clubs. But Kirby decided to play clubs from hand. He led the jack of clubs; when that held he followed with ace and another.

When West wins the third club, which heart should he play? In practice he led the eight. As East knew West had the nine from his opening lead of the ten, East interpreted the eight as a request for the lower ranking suit, i.e. diamonds. So

he returned a diamond, and Kirby had nine tricks. West should have continued with the nine of hearts when he won the king of clubs. That would have indicated his entry was in the higher ranking suit, and so East would have returned a spade.

What if West's hearts had been Q 10 9 7? He would have had to return the seven. Now East appears to have a problem — either West started with Q 10 9 8 7 and is asking for a diamond, or he started with Q 10 9 7, in which case the seven has no particular significance. The answer is, East should play a spade — if West has an entry in diamonds declarer is unlikely to be able to take nine tricks without letting West in. The reverse does not apply.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.



KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Short leads

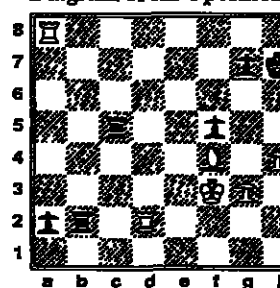
With two rounds to go in the Koop Tjuchem top grandmaster tournament in Groningen, Holland, Britain's top ranked player, grandmaster Nigel Short heads the field by half a point, having dispatched one of his main rivals, Jan Timman, the Dutch grandmaster, in the ninth round. Leading scores after nine rounds are as follows: Short 6½; Timman and Van Wely 5½; Gelfand 5; Hodgson, Leko, Shirov and Swidler 4½.

White: Nigel Short
Black: Jan Timman
Groningen, December 1996

Petroff Defence

1 e4	c5
2 Nf3	Nc6
3 d4	Nxe4
4 Bc3	Nc5
5 d5	Nc5
6 dxc6	e4
7 cxb7	Bxb7
8 Be2	ed3
9 Bb3	Bd3
10 Qd3	Be7
11 O-O	O-O
12 Rd1	Bf6
13 c4	Be5
14 Nd2	Re8
15 Bb1	a5
16 Nf1	Cf6
17 Qd6	Be6
18 Ne3	Be6
19 b3	a4
20 b4	Ne4
21 Nd5	Bd4
22 Kf1	Bd2
23 Nc7	Ne8
24 Rxd7	Nc3
25 Rb2	Bh4
26 Bf4	Bf6
27 b5	h5
28 h3	Bf7
29 Rxd2	Ne4
30 R2d5	Nc3

Diagram of final position



In a winning position Short's 42nd move was careless and Black could still have saved himself by playing 42... Rb1!

Hastings

After the first round at Hastings, the UK's strongest tournament, Mark Hebden, Bogdan Lalic and Xie Jun of China, the former women's world champion, all lead with one point. The favourite, Michael Adams lost to Hebden, while in the battle between the two co-winners from last year, Bogdan Lalic, the Croatian grandmaster, defeated Stuart Conquest.

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

Patsy Carr's five tips for healthy living

- 1 Never feel deprived in your eating. Have a little of everything but not too much
- 2 Don't be a couch potato. Take some light exercise
- 3 Take some sort of continuous exercise, such as running or swimming, three times a week. Keep going for at least 20 minutes each time
- 4 By all means drink alcohol but always in moderation
- 5 Be positive and believe in yourself in every mental and physical goal that you set yourself

Christopher Loveday's five tips to complete a marathon

- 1 If you are starting exercise and you are more than 40 years old, go to see your G.P. before you begin training. Find out whether there is any history of heart disease in your family before the visit
- 2 Losing weight is important. If you are very much overweight, join a slimming club
- 3 Take your running very steadily. Have one long run either at weekends or on your days off
- 4 Train with your colleagues. It alleviates the boredom on long runs
- 5 In the months leading up to the marathon, enter two or three races including at least one half-marathon — and wear the kit you will use on the day of the Flora London Marathon

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

THROCK
a. A traditional Irish waterproofing
b. Regional slang for Blackbird
c. A ploughhead

TRAVADO
a. A Latin American tinker
b. A sudden, violent storm
c. A rock climbing harness

TICKLENBURGS
a. South African slang for spider
b. A Wesphalian coarse linen
c. A pickpocket

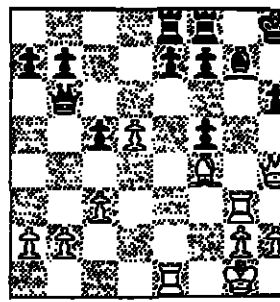
THEEK
a. A type of earthenware
b. To roof a building
c. A Middle Eastern town square

Answers on page 33

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Hubner — Miles, Tilburg 1985. Although for many years one of the world's very best grandmasters, the German Robert Hubner is equally well known in his academic career as a linguist. How did he translate his advantage here to victory?



Solution on page 33

RACING: GOLD CUP BECKONS A NOVICE SHOWING INCREASING MATURITY WITH EACH VICTORY

Dorans Pride leaps into reckoning

FROM OUR IRISH RACING CORRESPONDENT AT LEOPARDSTOWN

DORANS PRIDE is as low as 12-1 with Ladbrokes for the Cheltenham Gold Cup next March after an easy success over three vastly inferior opponents at Leopardstown on Saturday. William Hill has left his price unchanged at 10-1, a quote also offered by Coral, who cut him from 20-1.

Starting at 5-1 on the 1995 Stayers' Hurdle winner did no more than he was entitled to in winning the Neville and Sons Novices' Chase by a distance, but with Imperial Call's interrupted preparation and One Man's stamina doubts, Dorans Pride's stock as a credible Gold Cup contender is rising rapidly.

Although his connections have yet to commit themselves to steeplechasing's

Nap: BAROSSA VALLEY (2.35 Lingfield Park)
Next best: Effervescence (1.35 Lingfield Park)

showpiece, the horse's owner, Tom Doran, said: "He won't run in the Sun Alliance Chase and the Stayers' Hurdle is not my first preference as he has won that before."

Dorans Pride readily kept his unbeaten record in four races on Saturday but it was his ability to alternate spectacular leaps with clever adjustments at his fences that suggests he is as good a novice chaser as has been seen in recent years.

His trainer, Michael Hourigan, acknowledged his talents. "I am more than pleased with him," he said. "He couldn't have done more. I would have preferred a better race but he frightened off the opposition. The faster the pace, the better he will jump."

Hourigan said Dorans Pride is not a definite Gold Cup challenger but added:



Dorans Pride and Broderick are the No 1 combination in the William Neville and Sons Novices' Chase at Leopardstown on Saturday

"He is doing everything right, which means we can go anywhere with him."

In the short term that means an £13,000 novices' chase over two miles five furlongs at Leopardstown on February 2. With Imperial Call and Danoli having the Hennessy Gold Cup at the same meeting on their agenda, the events of the day could redefine the Gold Cup betting market.

Before Imperial Call is put to that test, however, his trainer, Fergie Sutherland, has earmarked the Foxrock

Handicap Chase at Leopardstown on January 19 for his next outing.

"The race is only two miles three furlongs but there's nothing much else at that time and I want to run," Sutherland said. "He's completely recovered from his fall and I'm sure his jumping is not going to be a problem."

What A Question bounced back from her Ascot failure behind Ocean Hawk with an all-the-way victory over the odds-on Antipora in the three-mile Christmas Hurdle.

The Mouse Morris-trained mare, third to Cyborg in the Stayers' Hurdle last March, will be aimed at that race again with a warm-up in the Boardmill Hurdle at Navan next month.

Although Istabraq may seem to be the main Irish candidate for the Sun Alliance Hurdle, the Mullins family are lining up to take him on. Noble Thyme, who beat Istabraq at Punchestown in November, held off Ask The Butler by a short head in a driving finish to the Stillorgan

Orchard Novices' Hurdle, a credible effort considering that Paddy Mullins, his trainer, revealed that the six-year-old had burst a blood vessel. "I am happy with him because they made a sprint of it, and my horse is not a sprinter," Mullins said.

His son, Willie, trained Jodelite to record a comfortable win in the maiden hurdle, but the Co Carlow-based trainer expects improvement. "Over hurdles he has left his bumper form well behind and the Sun Alliance is a possibility," he

said. "He should come on a lot from that."

There was a sad ending to the Ericsson Chase when the winner, Johnny Setaside, collapsed and died walking back to the parade ring. The Noel Meade-trained gelding, ridden by Richard Dunwoody, had been a three-length winner from King Of The Gales. "He carried me so bravely through the race it is a real shame. It was probably a heart attack. He started to shake and just collapsed under me."

Catterick offers only bright spot in gloomy picture

LINGFIELD PARK's all-weather track stages the only domestic racing today after the four scheduled National Hunt fixtures — at Carlisle, Newbury, Plumpton and Stratford — were abandoned because of frost. In Ireland, the meeting at Leopardstown — rescheduled from yesterday — must survive a 7.30am inspection.

Hopes of a return to jumping action before the new year rest with Catterick tomorrow. Milder weather in North Yorkshire has left the track raceable and no inspection is planned. "We are quietly optimistic," a spokesman said.

Should Catterick survive, the champion jockey, Tony McCoy, is to make his first visit to the course. His

agent, Dave Roberts, said: "I have been on the telephone to several trainers and hope Tony will have a full book of rides."

Prospects for racing are bleak at the New Year's Eve meetings at Fontwell, Taunton and Warwick. The all-weather card at Lingfield Park could again save a blank day. Looking further ahead, the tele-

vised meeting at Cheltenham on New Year's Day is already in doubt. Officials will inspect at 3.00pm today. "Prospects are poor. There is a diabolical forecast and the course is unraceable," the clerk of the course, Philip Arkwright, said.

The abandonment of today's four meetings brings the tally of jumping fixtures lost to 31 this season.

PROSPECTS

TOMORROW'S MEETINGS
LINGFIELD PARK: all-weather meeting
CATTERICK: raceable (no inspection planned)
FONTWELL: frozen (inspection 10.30am today)
TAUNTON: frozen (inspection 9.00am today)
WARWICK: frozen (inspection 11.00am today)

WEDNESDAY

CHELTENHAM: frozen (inspection 3.00pm today)

SATURDAY'S RESULTS

Wolverhampton

Going: standard
12.50 (7) 1. Murray's Mazda (J. Bramhill, 10-1); 2. Marjorie Rose (10-1); 3. Desert Invader (11-1); 4. Lough Crotter (3-1); 5. 10 m. 10-1; 6. 1-1; 7. 1-1; 8. 1-1; 9. 1-1; 10. 1-1; 11. 1-1; 12. 1-1; 13. 1-1; 14. 1-1; 15. 1-1; 16. 1-1; 17. 1-1; 18. 1-1; 19. 1-1; 20. 1-1; 21. 1-1; 22. 1-1; 23. 1-1; 24. 1-1; 25. 1-1; 26. 1-1; 27. 1-1; 28. 1-1; 29. 1-1; 30. 1-1; 31. 1-1; 32. 1-1; 33. 1-1; 34. 1-1; 35. 1-1; 36. 1-1; 37. 1-1; 38. 1-1; 39. 1-1; 40. 1-1; 41. 1-1; 42. 1-1; 43. 1-1; 44. 1-1; 45. 1-1; 46. 1-1; 47. 1-1; 48. 1-1; 49. 1-1; 50. 1-1; 51. 1-1; 52. 1-1; 53. 1-1; 54. 1-1; 55. 1-1; 56. 1-1; 57. 1-1; 58. 1-1; 59. 1-1; 60. 1-1; 61. 1-1; 62. 1-1; 63. 1-1; 64. 1-1; 65. 1-1; 66. 1-1; 67. 1-1; 68. 1-1; 69. 1-1; 70. 1-1; 71. 1-1; 72. 1-1; 73. 1-1; 74. 1-1; 75. 1-1; 76. 1-1; 77. 1-1; 78. 1-1; 79. 1-1; 80. 1-1; 81. 1-1; 82. 1-1; 83. 1-1; 84. 1-1; 85. 1-1; 86. 1-1; 87. 1-1; 88. 1-1; 89. 1-1; 90. 1-1; 91. 1-1; 92. 1-1; 93. 1-1; 94. 1-1; 95. 1-1; 96. 1-1; 97. 1-1; 98. 1-1; 99. 1-1; 100. 1-1; 101. 1-1; 102. 1-1; 103. 1-1; 104. 1-1; 105. 1-1; 106. 1-1; 107. 1-1; 108. 1-1; 109. 1-1; 110. 1-1; 111. 1-1; 112. 1-1; 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Takeovers by foreign firms 'distort data'

LABOUR will today mount an attack on the Government's inward investment record, claiming that takeovers of British companies by overseas businesses have given a misleading lift to the figures (Christine Buckley writes).

According to Stephen Byers, Labour's employment spokesman, 60 per cent of inward investment in 1995 came from takeovers by foreign investors.

The takeovers of South Western Electricity by Southern Company and Seaboard by Central and South West Corporation accounted for a fifth of the inward investment.

Boardrooms 'too biased towards the shareholders'

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

THE prime duty of directors is to the company and not to their shareholders, a report says today.

In evidence to a Stock Exchange-backed inquiry into corporate governance headed by Sir Ronnie Hampel, ICI chairman, the Centre for Tomorrow's Company says chief

executives and their boards appear to believe that it is their legal duty to concentrate attention only on pleasing current shareholders.

But the centre, established by the Royal Society for Arts, says that directors' duties are owed to the company broadly, not to any specific "third-party" group.

In its evidence to the Hampel inquiry, the centre says: "For directors not to give due weight to all the company's key relationships may well be a breach of fiduciary duty."

To do so, it says, may be to expose the company to undue financial risk as well as missing opportunities to add to long-term shareholder value through wider relationships with other stakeholders such as suppliers, customers and employees.

In a clear reference to possible new corporate law by Labour - which broadly supports the stakeholder approach - wins the forthcoming election, the centre says: "If companies wish to avoid the imposition of a more prescriptive format of new company law, it is becoming increasingly urgent that board

practice is brought closer into line with the spirit of the existing law."

The centre has also submitted as evidence interviews with 48 leading company chairmen and chief executives.

It urges the Hampel inquiry to move beyond the approaches of the previous Cadbury and Greenbury inquiries into corporate governance, and to concentrate on what it calls companies' "licence to operate".

The centre says: "Compliance with Cadbury and Greenbury does not fix this. What is needed is a clear framework for businesses to be transparent and accountable both about their values and about the value which they add. Businesses need to demonstrate both by their behaviour and by their disclosure that they prepared to live and be judged by those values."

Mark Goyder, of the RSA, says: "You can envisage code after code, and the public will still be fed up with business. What we are saying is, let's try to address the issues and the values where the problem lies - which is business telling the public what it stands for."



Apocalypse over: Peter Hardy, the Lloyd's underwriter, with Russian helicopters in Hanoi

Limited liability at Lloyd's

By Oliver August

THE concept of limited liability is today being introduced to names at Lloyd's of London, who have lost millions of pounds in unlimited insurance deals.

The new system, developed by Hardy Underwriting will allow Lloyd's names to keep their funds in the insurance market without the risk of bankruptcy. Other similar schemes are likely to follow. Rules allowing the formation of a limited-liability company

were passed by Lloyd's last summer.

Peter Hardy, who runs Syndicate 382, has created a separate insurance company, whose shares begin trading on the Alternative Investment Market today. Hardy Underwriting Group was priced at 145p per share, giving it a market capitalisation of £10.65 million. Syndicate 382 is primarily insuring marine and aviation ventures. The syndicate has created average

annual profits of 29 per cent since its inception in 1975.

Mr Hardy said: "Syndicate 382 has been one of the more consistently profitable syndicates at Lloyd's with an underwriting team that has worked together for many years."

Names at Syndicate 382 can switch their Lloyd's funds into AIM stock. They will receive dividends and profit from rises in the share price and, most importantly, be safe from bankruptcy.

Oil and gas production increases

By Martin Barrow

UK OIL and gas production rose in November to the highest level since October 1995 and is expected to continue rising in the coming months.

However, falling oil prices and the strengthening of the pound curtailed the rise in revenue. Daily oil revenues fell 7.2 per cent on the month, although the value of oil production was £8.7 million per day higher than one year ago, according to the monthly Royal Bank of Scotland Oil and Gas Index published today.

The oil index rose 2.2 per cent to 164.0 in November and was 1.7 per cent ahead year-on-year. Oil output grew by 58,000 barrels per day (bpd) to just above 2.7 million bpd.

Gas production increased by more than one third during November to 10.3 million cubic feet per day and the gas index rose 35.6 per cent to 304.1, lifting it 15.4 per cent ahead of November 1995.

Brent crude prices fell 4.8 per cent in November to \$22.97 a barrel, although prices were still 36.5 per cent higher than a year ago. The sterling price fell 9.2 per cent because of depreciation of the pound against the dollar. In sterling terms, the price of oil is up more than 28 per cent year-on-year. The effect of falling oil prices and a stronger pound was that daily oil revenues fell 7.2 per cent on the month to £37.3 million.

SUNDAY TIPS FOR 1997

The Sunday Telegraph, Cable and Wireless, BAT Industries, Microvitac, Medeva, Capital Shopping Centres, Vardon, First Choice, Sears, Global Group and HSBC Hong Kong Growth unit trust.

The Sunday Times: Babcock International, Rank, Celtic Football Club, Stanford Rook, the biotechnology company, United Biscuits, Alders, Mentmore Abbey, the stationery and storage firm, and BAT Industries.

The Independent on Sunday believes the most likely takeover targets are

Imperial Tobacco, Wickes, Southern Electric, Yorkshire Electricity, Severn Trent and the water sector generally, Yorkshire-Tees TV and the small regional ITV companies, EMI, General Accident, Commercial Union, Premier Club, Crossfield, the chemicals to timber group.

The Mail on Sunday advises buying into WPP, the advertising group, Close Brothers, the merchant bank, Television Corp, Mosaic and Datatouch, the computer products distributor.

ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENT MARKET

1996	High	Low	Mid cap (millions)	Price	Why	Yld	P/E	1996	High	Low	Mid cap (millions)	Price	Why	Yld	P/E
150	132	13.00	AFR Systems	130				255	188	5.51	Romesco	275		1.5	
152	109	21.40	AMCO Corp	150		4.2	11.2	343	253	8.05	Prolab	267			
87	18	36.20	AMCO Pub	175				45	32	5.53	PWR Higgs	32			
15	14	4.05	Albion	94			24.1	109	139	12.30	Parnham	110			
107	99	14.00	Access Plus	99				47	14	16.20	Parnham	42			
161	75	13.30	Active Imaging	100				144	93	4.05	Faringham Higgs	141		2.4	10.1
210	123	23.50	A de Gaudy	200	-10	3.9	15.0	130	122	13.90	Fatol Int Telp	125			
107	99	14.00	Access Plus	99			23.3	47	14	4.67	Fatol Int Telp	42			
89	16	40.80	Aether	99				13	13	17.30	Fatol Int Telp	13			
31	13	11.00	Alchemie & Bi	99		1.0	17.1	139	9	3.30	Sander Higgs	55			
107	99	14.00	Access Plus	99				109	9	16.20	Farman Higgs	109			
24	4	3.85	Alpha Orion	100				119	33	63.50	San Int Higgs	16			
495	380	44.30	Am St Brewery	402		5.3	10.4	230	15	20.70	San Int Higgs	23			
102	88	10.10	Amco	101		7.9		13	13	4.82	San Int Higgs	13			
12	10	49.30	Anchor	97				122	114	41.50	San Int Higgs	122			
100	100	10.20	Anchor Deckard	100		1.0	55.6	6	6	2.99	Greenhill	9			
81	29	21.40	Asch	100				139	12	1.78	Greenhill	140	-2	38	12.5
142	68	26.80	Asch Cont	125				180	169	31.30	Galt	180			
148	64	1.10	Asch Int	154				20	41	0.81	Greenhill	20			
149	123	41.10	BATM Adv Comm	132				68	53	2.40	Hill	67		6.2	7.3
86	57	11.30	Bardonia Health	100				275	155	6.22	Hewlett	275		2.6	17.0
4	3	5.66	Bardonia	100				255	180	5.00	Hewlett A	245		2.9	15.1
4	3	5.66	Bardonia	100				105	48	2.54	Hewlett P	100	+10	5.4	100.0
4	3	5.66	Bardonia	100				127	87	10.30	Higgins	119			
4	3	5.66	Bardonia	100				144	70	14.70	Higgins	144		2.4	17.8
4	3	5.66	Bardonia	100				109	104	7.06	Higgins	109			
4	3	5.66	Bardonia	100				237	115	14.70	Higgins	237		1.4	
150	140	1.01	Bowman Linc	147		3.8	9.4	200	128	2.67	ES	200	-2		
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THE
TIMESCITY
DIARYA share in
New England

A TASTE of New England is coming to the City. A 78-seater restaurant is to open in Lower Thames Street in April, reflecting the region's flavours, from lobster sandwiches and chowder, to crab cakes and clam bake. Mitefman Caradoc-Hodgkins, the architect, have kept the polished mahogany panelling and arch windows of the former merchant bank building, incorporating the style of a seaboard yachting fraternity. Spearheaded by David Wilby, executive chef for Anthony Worrall-Thompson until recently, The Chartroom Restaurant Company is seeking investors for 46,000 £1 Ordinary shares at £6 each.

French connection

THE London offices of Regent Pacific, the Hong Kong fund manager, should be interesting to visit in the new year after the delivery of an "installation" by Dominique Blondin, the French artist. The piece involves flashing lights, a few snipped Coke cans and dabs of paint. No-one at Regent has been brave enough to unwrap it yet.

A BUSY time of year for Michael Hardern, the arch building society carpet-bagger. When Hardern relaxes, he tells me, he reaches for his essential reading — the Building Societies Bill.

Busy calendar

LOOKING through Ernst & Young's attractive calendar I am left wondering whether the best counters actually spend any time at their desks. In January alone, there is the London International Boat Show, the Holiday Show, the Australian Tennis Open, the Rugby Union Five Nations, the Superbowl...

MORAG PRESTON

Entrepreneurs with that
extra golden touchJon Ashworth
on Britain's
growing band
of serial
millionaires

THE fast-paced Eighties gave rise to a new phenomenon — the serial millionaires. Publicans, sportsmen and computer nerds made fortune after fortune, striking lucky with ideas that caught the popular imagination. The past year has seen more examples than ever of these golden entrepreneurs — and the pace shows no sign of slowing.

Sir Terence Conran and Richard Branson are among dozens of individuals to make their first million and then return to repeat the formula with similar success. Conran, 65, who founded Habitat in 1964, and built the giant Storehouse chain during the Eighties, did the same with restaurants in the Nineties, creating a gastronomic empire that continues to grow.

Problems at Butler's Wharf dented Conran's fortune — estimated at about £50 million — but the success of Quaglin's, Mezzo and other fashionable venues, have secured his reputation as a serial millionaire.

Some of it is down to fate — the National Lottery and National Savings have created nearly 600 millionaires between them — but a handful create their own luck. Some of the best examples are in the fertile territory of theme pubs and high street eateries.

Few can match the success of Michael Cannon, who struck lucky for the first time in 1993 when he made £23 million on the sale of Devenish, his pub company. Hungry for more, he founded the Magic Pub Company and sold out to Greene King two years later for nearly £200 million.

Cannon started in 1975 with a half-share in a pub in Bristol.

Another prime contender is David Bruce, who sold the Firkin chain of pubs to Midsummer Leisure for £6.6 million in 1988. He is now the single largest shareholder in



On the ball: David Whelan switched from football to business

Grosvenor Inns, which owns the Slug & Lettuce chain. Hugh Corbett is a millionaire three times over, founding Slug & Lettuce in the Eighties and then returning with a chain called Harvey Floorbangers. That was sold in 1992, netting £4.5 million for Corbett and his partner. Corbett is now building a London-based chain of Tupp pubs.

Those still contemplating their next move include Derek Mapp, founder of Tom Cobleigh, the northern-based pub chain. He started with one pub in 1992 and recently sold out to The Rank Group for £95.6 million, making £6.4 million on the deal.

Roger Myers and Karen Jones cashed in July when Whitbread bought their Pelican Group, owner of Dome and Café Rouge for £133

million. The deal left Myers holding about £3 million in shares and options. Jones held a stake worth £2.7 million.

Sport, too, has yielded its serial stars. David Whelan, the former Blackburn Rovers defender, built a small super-market chain in Wigan after a broken leg in the 1960 FA Cup Final curtailed his top-flight footballing career.

He sold out to Wm Morrison for £1.5 million in 1978, then paid £12,000 for JJ Broughton, a 75-year-old Wigan sports company. He built JJB Sports into Europe's largest independent sports retailer, making £13.5 million when it came to the stock market in November 1994.

Alan Pascoe, the former Commonwealth 400 metres hurdles champion, branched into sports marketing after



Jones: sold Pelican stake



Conran: gastronomic empire

quitting the track in 1978. He sold Alan Pascoe Associates for £7.5 million in 1986, then bought it back for £1.5 million six years later. Today, Pascoe is worth at least £5 million.

David Lloyd, the former Davis Cup tennis player, made £20 million when Whitbread bought David Lloyd Leisure in 1995. He opened his first club in Heston, west London, in 1982, and went on to build a fast growing health and leisure portfolio.

Perhaps the greatest British serial millionaire is Richard Branson, who started off selling records in the Seventies and went on to build a successful empire. Branson, 46, has modelled his Virgin Group on a Japanese *keiretsu*, linking airlines, financial services, radio and soft drinks in a loose association under the Virgin

umbrella. Debt has not been an issue since 1992 when Branson sold Virgin Music to Thorn EMI (as it then was) for £500 million.

Branson's worth was recently estimated at £1.6 billion, ahead of Paul Raymond, the soft-porn publisher and Soho property owner, and David Sainsbury, head of the super-market family. Since 1984, Virgin's revenues have grown from £50 million to £1.5 billion. Branson's family trust has the biggest stake in Virgin.

Some have yet to prove their mettle. Tim Waterstone, founder of Waterstones, the book chain, returns in 1997 with a chain of all-in-one "children's" shops. The first, Daisy & Tom, opened, backed in part by DC Thomson, publisher of *Beano* and *Dandy*, will open in London in the summer. The shops will feature educational toys, videos and clothes, along with a "soda fountain" for thirsty youngsters. Waterstone sold out to WH Smith for more than £40 million in 1993.

The number of millionaires in Britain has doubled in the past five years, fuelled by rising property values and spiralling stock markets. About 200 new millionaires have been created every week, although how many actually have hard cash to throw around is another matter.

Property and shares make up 61.5 per cent of a typical estate on death, according to the Inland Revenue. Only 26.8 per cent was made up of cash and the rest comprised insurance policies, loans and household goods. Based on these figures, a sizeable number of Britain's more than 100,000 millionaires are tycoons in name only.

That said, the National Lottery creates two or three genuine millionaires every week and a steady stream of executives continue to benefit from enormous boardroom packages.

The tradition of the small entrepreneur building a business then selling out for millions of pounds is alive and well. Some of them come back for a second round.

TOMORROW
The utility millionairesTo relatively
better times

IT was not an exceptional year for the gilt-edged market in 1996, measured either in absolute or relative terms. The new year promises greater relative performance.

According to our annual equity-gilt study the gilt returns, adjusted for inflation, placed 1996 in the third quartile of results recorded since 1918. Relative to other bond markets, particularly those of our European neighbours, the results were uninspiring.

This should not have been a surprise: this column warned, exactly one year ago, that the UK's budget deficit outlook did not compare favourably with that of our G7 counterparts over the short term.

Despite robust economic growth the UK's budget deficit has been a disappointment. The problem appears to come from the revenue side and the November Budget set out to collect higher corporate tax and VAT payments.

Progress has been made but this does not appear to be taken into account in the current spread of gilt yields over those in other G7 bond markets. The size of these spreads is beginning to look like an anomaly, which will be the focus of international investors in 1997.

Although there are understandable concerns about inflation and hence interest rates in the UK these do not carry the same warning signs as elsewhere.

For example, there is a growing awareness that those economies that seem most likely to form the core membership of EMU are no longer paying investors any significant risk premium for something going wrong. The UK, by contrast, is carrying a very high risk premium.

Many domestic commentators would argue that this is required to provide payment for a greater inflation risk in the years to come. There can be no doubting the UK's troubled inflation past. Neither should we ignore excess money supply growth. With broad money supply growing at nearly twice the rate of

nominal income growth, concern is warranted. Memories of the late Eighties remain vivid since similar conditions preceded the consumer boom of 1988. But whereas the excess liquidity was then spent and flowed overseas — both proving to be inflationary — there seems a greater chance this time that this excess money will be saved.

Attitudes to savings appear to be changing and a current account which is virtually in balance, in contrast to the deficit equivalent to 3.5 per cent of GDP recorded in 1988, suggests that national savings rates are different.

We also have a more open debate about interest rates which may be extended by a Labour Government into a genuinely independent Central Bank. Risk premia applied to the UK may not be as large if this occurs.

All this presupposes that we can trust the data presented to us. Yet another lesson of the Eighties was that the national accounts data underestimated the underlying economic growth rates and hence led to monetary tightening coming later and needing to be more extreme. Cross-sectional research is indicating a different approach to discretionary saving that may suggest we are in danger of making a different mistake in this cycle, namely, overestimating nominal demand expectations.

But absence of hard evidence and our past experiences would argue that a reasonably high risk premium should remain. I doubt that it needs to be as high as at present (185 basis points relative to Germany at the time of writing). I also believe that many overseas investors regard this payment as more than adequate for the risks taken. Next year should therefore begin with gilts finding relative favour even if the policy tightening expected acts as a constraint on how far gilt yields can fall.

MICHAEL HUGHES
BZWFor, and not
for, children

Ridley Walker, Radio 4, 7.45pm. The Box of Delights, Radio 4, 2.00pm.

Any vestiges of festive bonhomie you might have been lucky enough to cling on to will start withering away after the first 15 minutes or so of Dominic Power's dramatisation of Russell Hoban's novel. This is nightmare stuff, set in a lawless post-apocalyptic Britain where furnished parents eat their babies. You would never believe that this same Russell Hoban wrote classics of children's literature such as *The Mouse and his Child*. For another adult's re-creation of the anything-is-possible world of children, listen to John Peacock's two-part adaptation of John Masfield's superb fantasy *The Box of Delights*, with Donald Sinden magnificently over the top as the arch-villain Abner Brown.

The Emerald Affair, Radio 2, 10.30pm.

Cart-like, Harry Lime had another eight lives left after getting his just desserts in the Vienna sewers in *The Third Man*. A minimum of eight lives, actually, because the old Light Programme of the BBC ran 52 episodes of Lime's further adventures in the 1950s Orson Welles, desperately needing cash to finance his cinema version of *Othello*, was happy to play the resurrected crook. His voice was not the only feature common to both Carol Reed's film and the BBC radio series. The dust of postwar Vienna was dusted off Anton Karas's zither and it was once again put to evocative use. Peter Daville

RADIO 1

8.00am Kevin Greening, includes at 7.30 Newbeat 12.00 Dave Pearce 3.00pm Mark Goodier 7.00 Newbeat Review '96 The Radio 1s look at the year's events through music, news and sport 8.00 Priority Night Extravaganza. Showcases of talent to emerge in 1997, guest from the Golden Green Hippodrome, North London 12.00 Mary Anne Hobbs 4.00am Charlie Jordan

RADIO 2

6.00am Nick Barakat 7.30 Sarah Kennedy 9.30 Alan Leslie 11.30 Jimmy Young 12.00 Debbie Thorne 2.00 Ed Stewart 5.05 John Dunn's Best of the Guests 7.00 Hubert Gregg 7.30 Malcolm Laycock 8.30 Big Band Special 9.00 First Ladies of Jazz With Clara Martin, Honor Hefferman and the BBC Big Band 10.00 No Minor Chords. André Previn reads from his autobiography 10.10 The Emerald Affair. See Choice 11.00 Bob Harris 1.00am Adrian Pritchard 3.00am Steve Madden

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Entertainment '96 6.00 The Breakfast Programme 8.30 The Radio 5 Live Midday with Neil 2.05 Ruscoe on Five 4.00 John Inverdale Nationwide 7.00 News Extra 7.30 Sportsworld 8.05 Sports Review of the Year. A look back at the best of the action from 1996 10.05 Class Warfare 11.00 Night Extra 11.30 Never Walk Alone. A drama set in a football club by Ed Thompson (16) 12.00am The Side of Midnight from Hong Kong 2.05 Up All Night

TALK RADIO

6.00am Early Breakfast 7.00 Paul Ross 8.00 Scott Cranston 12.00 2.00pm Tommy Boyd 4.00 Christine Fyfe 6.00 Deely 7.00 Moz Dee's Sportszone 10.00 James White 1.00am Mike Dickinson

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, with Penny Gore. Includes: Elton (Sally: Horns); Outfit (Seven Elizabethan Lyrics); Barlow (Reverie at Caprice, Op 3) 9.00 Morning Collection, with Catherine Young, includes Zvezdeli (Violin Concerto in E, Op 1 No 3); Verdi (Five Mares); Tolstolovsky (Symphony No 1 in G minor, Winter Daydreams) 10.00 Musical Encounters, with Edward Blakemore, includes Mozart (Fantasia in C minor); Schubert (Lullaby for the Madwoman of Sarr); Legend; Chausson (Chanson Perpetuelle); Mozart (Symphony No 1 in E flat) 12.00 Composer of the Week: Leonard Bernstein 1.00pm News; Chopin by Arrangement, introduced by Jeremy Nicholas, includes Saint-Saëns's two-piano version of Piano Sonata No 2 in B flat minor, Op 35 (24) 2.00 The BBC Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, under Marked Horack, with Leon McCawley, piano, Schubert (Cherubs; Fossesurround); Mozart (Piano Concerto No 9 in E flat); Mahler (Symphony No 1) 3.45 Voices: Christmas Party (1) 4.30 Lester Leaps In. An exploration of the recording career of the saxophonist Lester Young, with Russell Davies (1) 5.00 Music Machines, with Tommy Pearson 5.15 Interpretations on Record: Vivaldi's Four Seasons, with Harry Haskell (1) 6.30 Private Pastimes. Michael Berkeley talks to the

RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping Forecast (LW) 6.00 News Ending 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Prayer for the Day 6.30 Today 6.40 Christmas Truce 8.55 Weather 9.00 News 9.05 Start the Week (FM), with Melvyn Bragg and guests 9.00 Test Match Special: Zimbabwe v England (LW). Coverage of the final day's play in Harare 10.00 News: Dear Diary (FM) 10.00 Daily Service (LW) 10.15 On This Day (LW) 10.20 David Cooper's Necessary Pleasures (FM). A look at the world of outs 10.30 Test Match Special (LW) 11.00 My Brother Melvyn the Holmes at the Movies (FM). Film historian John Huxley traces the history of sound effects (1) 11.30 The Old Curiosity Shop (FM). Elizabethan drama of Charles Dickens's classic. With Denis O'Hare (16) 12.00 News: You and Yours (FM). With Lesley Riddoch 12.25pm Noel Coward — from His Diaries Politics and Religion. Simon Cadell reads extracts from the celebrated diaries (33) (1) 12.55 Weather 1.00 The World at One, with Nick Clarke 1.07 Test Match Special (LW) 1.40 The Archers (FM) (1) 1.55 Shipping Forecast. See Choice 3.30 Comparing Notes with Brian Kay. Peter Kemp joins Brian Kay to take a look at the lives and musical styles of the Strauss family. 4.00 News 4.05 Daring to Be the Dane. A look at Michael Melvyn as he prepares to play Hamlet in Greenwich (1) 4.45 Short Story: Clap Hands, Here Comes Christmas, by Beryl Bainbridge. Read by June Barrie 5.00 PM 5.50 Shipping 5.55 6.00 Six O'Clock News 6.15 Going South: The Champagne Area. Kevin Connolly continues his journey through France (1) 6.30 News Quiz of the Year, with Simon Hoggart, Francis Whelan, Andy Hamilton, Jeremy Hardy and Times columnist Alan Coran (1) 7.00 News 7.05 The Archers 7.20 The Food Programme, with Derek Cooper (1) 7.45 The Monday Play: Ridley Walker. See Choice 9.45 Inside the Hood. A look at the history of the anorak 9.59 Weather 10.00 The World Tonight 10.45 Book at Bedtime: Scarlet and Black by Stendhal. Read by Greg Wise (1/10) 11.00 Sentimental Journey. Comedy impressionist Malcolm Hardee revisits Greenwich with Arthur Smith (6/6) (1) 11.30 Rent It, by Lucy Farnham. Comedy starring Barbara Flynn, Patrick Barlow and Linda Polan (1) 12.00 News and 12.27am approx Weather 12.30 The Late Book: Through the Looking Glass, by Lewis Carroll. Adapted by David Self and read by Alan Bennett (1/7) 12.45 Shipping Forecast 1.00am World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE: RADIO 1 FM 97.6-98.8, RADIO 2 FM 88.0-90.2, RADIO 3 FM 90.2-92.4, RADIO 4 FM 92.4-94.6, LW 198; MW 126 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM FM 100-102, VIRGIN RADIO, FM 105.6, MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO, MW 1053, 1089. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McManis.

NO TURKEY. JUST RABBIT.

ITV tonight 8pm-9pm. "Now We're Talking."
With Phillip Schofield, Terry Wogan, Frank Bruno and guests.

Of stones, bones and time-lapse trickery

Willie Collins may have written the first detective story, but the Sergeant Cuff we met in last night's adaptation of *The Moonstone* (BBC2) was the unrepentant television device to grace our screens. When Collins created him, Cuff was an original. Now he is not. This was unfortunate.

We had met his type too many times before — the self-confident outsider, as happy talking to the lady of the house as he is to her maid. "What's to be done next?" asked Bertrande the butler. "I'm going to look at the rose garden," replied Cuff. "For clues?" "No, I'm just fond of roses." Ah, we mused, the engaging eccentricity which no television detective dare be without. When Collins wrote that, it too, was a first. Last night it was not. If Cuff had arrived driving a maroon Mark II Jaguar or departed on the back of Hetty Wainthrop's scooter... well, none of

us would have been a bit surprised. As I say, it was all very unfortunate.

It was also unavoidable, especially if you insist on boiling down Collins's complex masterpiece into a little over two hours of television. The BBC, however, insisted and we had to live with the consequences, such as characters no longer engaging in polite conversation but explaining a couple of chapters-worth of plot to each other instead.

Too sour, do you think? Perhaps so. For surely some Willie, albeit cruelly abridged Willie, is better than no Willie at all, and for all my reservations, I did enjoy part one of Kevin Elton's two-part adaptation. There were lots of coaches and pianos and buckets of not altogether convincing rain. This, I suspect, means it was real.

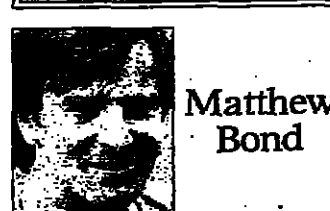
But, more important, there was an excellent cast, led by Peter Vaughan, who seems to be making

a habit of playing butlers, and Anthony Sher, giving it his typical all as the cunning Cuff. Greg Wise and Keeley Hawes made a handsome couple as Franklin Blake and Rachel Verinder, before the disappearance of the sacred diamond put an end to their relationship, pretty much before it had begun.

In the rush to get on with the story, it seemed to me that not enough time had been allowed for their budding romance. Collins's denouement, as I presume we discover in tonight's concluding instalment, is not the most satisfying of final solutions and their love story has a crucial part to play.

Moving swiftly on, can I humbly suggest that if your Christmas break extends to new year, you spend the next three lunchtimes watching the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (BBC2), about fossils. If the first two are anything to go by,

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

they will be outstanding. At first meeting, Professor Simon Conway Morris is not the most promising of lecturers, having the looks and verbal delivery of a young John Major. But in terms of clarity of thought, he leaves the Prime Minister dead and mineralised.

Conway Morris is also a brave man. In the second lecture yesterday, he began by dashing the

hopes of a raptor-mad generation. *Jurassic Park* was just not going to happen. The DNA contained in fossilised amber remains had been found to be contaminated, the code for dinosaur life irretrievably corrupted. I waited for some of the younger members of my audience to be led from the lecture theatre sobbing. But nobody moved. Conway Morris, you see, had promised that dinosaurs could still live again.

Quite brilliantly, he began to show how. His aim is to show that there is a lot more to palaeontology than bashing a lump of rock with a hammer and chisel. His approach is a multi-disciplinary one, calling on bits of chemistry, physics and biology to fulfil his original promise of bringing the bones back to life. Some of the science must go over the heads of his traditionally young audience, but when he finishes — as he did yesterday — by filling the lecture theatre with

the haunting warning call of a something-o-saur, I don't think there will be many complaints.

Nor should there be in the wake of *The Restless Year* (BBC2, Saturday), the one new contribution to the channel's rather indulgent *Natural History Night*. Time-lapse photography is considered old hat these days — seen one cloud scud, seen 'em all. Then, a film begins with an opening shot so breathtaking you have to watch the rest just to work out how a camera can pan through 180 degrees of a Cornish landscape and follow the course of the four seasons at the same time. I think I got there eventually... but they must have cheated with the sky, mustn't they?

Tim Sheppard is the man who knows. Having perfected the techniques during the making of *The Private Life of Plants*, Sheppard turned his cameras on the Cois-

wolds to wonderful effect. It wasn't just time-lapse — we were also treated to speeded-up milkmaids parading and slow-motion March hare burrowing. It was that technique that stuck in the memory. True, some of the images of leaves expanding, shoots jostling and mushrooms doing whatever mushrooms do were old hat. But others, such as molehills appearing in a water-meadow or marrows growing in a vegetable garden were both fascinating and funny.

Despite the soothing tones of Norman Painting, aka Phil Archer, Richard Mabey's script — written presumably before his *Flora Britannica* filled a million Christmas stockings and put such hack work behind him — did occasionally jar. Cricket may be many things, but "an elaborate metaphor for the whole cycle of summer growth" is surely not one of them. Ask Mike Atherton.

BBC1

7.00am NEWS (2431301) 7.10 Joe 90 (745108) 7.30 Busy World of Richard Scarry (165055) 8.00 News (5299740) 8.10 Benny (4550011) 8.15 Peter Pan (7462301) 8.30 Legend of Prince Valiant (4685214) 9.00 News (3638092) 9.05 Incredible Games (4260108) 9.30 Record Breakers (39387) 10.00 Playdays (4655547) 10.20 William's Wish Wellingtons (5623818)

10.30 FILM: The Barefoot Executive (1971). Slapstick Disney comedy, with Kurt Russell (2380503)

12.05pm THE MUPPETS With guest, country singer Garth Brooks (214684)

12.30 WIREDOU (79633)

1.00 NEWS (7) (9176856)

1.13 REGIONAL NEWS (8275450)

1.15 NEIGHBOURS (7) (5845276)

1.35 NEIGHBOURS: 10TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL A behind-the-scenes documentary celebrating the popular Australian soap (7) (7246547)

2.15 THE WORLD'S STRONGEST MAN (7) (196491)

2.45 FILM: The Boy Who Could Fly (1986) with Lucy Deakins and Bonnie Bedelia. A young girl discovers her autistic powers in this touching and heartwarming story. Directed by Nick Castle (7) (5658924)

4.30 THE WORLD OF PETER RABBIT AND FRIENDS (7035498) 4.55 Newsworld Review of the Year (7) (1210585) 5.25 The Biz (7) (8983092)

5.15 NEIGHBOURS (7) (7) (529005)

5.50 NEWS (7) and weather (430112)

6.30 REGIONAL NEWS (7) (896769)

6.45 WINTER ON ONE (465740)

6.50 THIS IS YOUR LIFE (7) (498653)

7.30 A MONKEY FOR ALL SEASONS David Attenborough. A film about Japan's macaque-monkeys (7) (169)

8.00 EASTENDERS Grant tries to put the romance back into his marriage (7) (5011)

8.30 CHEF! Everton comes to the rescue when Gareth receives two very inviting offers from the women in his life. Last in series (7) (1818)

9.00 NEWS (7) regional news and weather (9818)

9.30 FILM: Death Becomes Her (1992) Novelists Goldie Hawn swears revenge against actress friend Meryl Streep for poaching her fiancé, often entertaining thoughts of murder, but things take a bizarre turn when they each discover the secret of immortality. Also starring Bruce Willis and Isabella Rossellini. Directed by Robert Zemeckis (7) (562855)

11.05 REVIEW 96 Justin Webb reviews some of the year's major news stories (7) (531382)

12.25pm THE MRS MERTON SHOW CHRISTMAS SPECIAL (7) (2823290)

12.55 FILM: Billion Dollar Brain (1967) Michael Caine as secret agent Harry Palmer, who comes out of retirement to take a mysterious canister to Finland and becomes involved in an American megamillionaire's bid to take over the world. Directed by Ken Russell (25533)

2.40 WEATHER (5609035)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCodes, which allow you to programme your video recorder to record a programme. To find the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record, Videoplus+ (+), Pluscode (+) and Video Programme are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Directory, published on Saturday

SKY 1

7.00pm Live Connection (4616470) 7.30 Press Your Luck (4629943) 7.40 Jeopardy! (404350) 8.10 Howl (541135) 8.30 Another World (16301) 8.45 Oprah Winfrey (771555) 9.00 Live (467148) 11.00 Sally Jessy Raphael (503468) 12.00 Genesis (5277) 1.00pm The News Connection (565471) 1.30pm The Simpsons (5769) 6.30 The Simpsons (5721) 7.00 The Simpsons (4979) 7.30 MASH (5505) 8.00 The News Connection (5127) 8.30 News at Ten: Diane, Princess of Wales (7634) 9.00 The Star Money (7658) 11.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation (32537) 12.00 LAPD (56112) 12.30pm Real TV (56308) 1.00 Live Mix (56784)

SKY 2

7.00pm Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (189458) 8.00 Star Trek: Voyager (187581) 9.00 The Conner (16301) 9.30 Oprah Winfrey (771555) 10.00 Live Show, with David Letterman (100052) 12.00 FILM: National Lampoon's Christmas Eve (251523) 8.00 Live Long Play (565122)

SKY NEWS

Weekdays news coverage, with bulletin on the hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week

SKY MOVIES

8.00pm Heat Like a Wink (1982) (24125) 8.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 9.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 9.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 10.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 10.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 11.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 11.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 12.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 12.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 1.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 1.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 2.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 2.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 3.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 3.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 4.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 4.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 5.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 5.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 6.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 6.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 7.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 7.30 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 8.00 Mousie: Veronique (1947) (161272) 8.30 Mousie: 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LIMITING 33

Lloyd's adopts the concept of limited liability

BUSINESS

MONDAY DECEMBER 30 1996

MILLIONS 34

Entrepreneurs with an extra golden touch



BUSINESS EDITOR LINDSAY COO

TUC fears working time opt-out will hit holidays

By OUR INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE TUC will give warning today that about six million workers in Britain will lose holidays if the Government succeeds in opting out from Europe's 48-hour week working time directive.

In advance of the coming general election, the unions will also say that the Government's move is "bad politics" and would affect about 9,000 people in every constituency. The Government wants Britain's

opt-out from the European Union Maastricht treaty social chapter to be extended to exclude the United Kingdom from Europe's working time directive.

John Major is insisting that Britain will not agree to any deal at the European Union's intergovernmental conference unless the United Kingdom's opt-out is extended.

This follows the rejection, by the European Court, of Britain's legal appeal against the directive, and the court's ruling that its measures

must now be applied in the United Kingdom.

As well as a limit on working hours, the directive, for the first time, sets minimum holiday standards for all employees, bringing Britain into line with every other European Union country by granting a legal minimum of three weeks' paid annual leave.

John Monks, TUC General Secretary, says he suspects most people "are left pretty cold" by many of the abstract arguments politicians have

about Europe — but that the working time directive offers real, concrete benefits to people in work.

He says of the Government's move: "Going into an election promising to stop five million people getting some extra annual holiday seems pretty bad politics to me. That's about 9,000 people in every constituency in Britain asked to put a cross against a box marked shorter holidays."

In an analysis of the impact of the Government's planned move, the

TUC says that almost six million people would lose their holidays if the Prime Minister succeeds in extending the opt-out.

The court's decision will offer 5,868,000 employees in Britain improved holiday rights for the first time, the unions say, which would be lost if the Government succeeds in its move against the working time directive.

About 2.5 million employees, representing 12.5 per cent of the workforce, who currently have no

paid annual leave, will gain holiday rights for the first time. Of these, 1.6 million are women, with most working part time.

When the workers who currently have fewer than three weeks' leave specified by the directive are also taken into account, the total standing to lose the rights offered by the directive rises to almost six million. Temporary workers in particular are likely to have no holiday entitlement, the TUC says in its report published today.

IoD says single currency threatens Britain

By OLIVER AUGUST

THE Institute of Directors has cautioned that joining the European single currency in 1997 would result in a threat to Britain's competitiveness.

In his new year rallying call to IoD members, Tim Melville-Ross, the director-general, said that "vitaly important decisions concerning our future in Europe" would be taken in the coming year.

He said: "A decision to join the single currency in 1997 or at any other time in the foreseeable future would so constrain our economic freedom as to make it virtually impossible for us to compete successfully. We must continue to pursue our own independent economic policy within the single market."

Mr Melville-Ross also said that UK employment could be endangered by labour regulations set out in the social chapter of the Maastricht treaty. "We must stay out of the social chapter and the single currency," he said. "Ending our opt-out from the social chapter would give our partners the opportunity to impose additional labour costs on us, so that it will be harder for us to compete, both in Europe and the rest of the world. This must mean higher unemployment, the last thing we need."

Looking ahead to the general election, Mr Melville-Ross emphasised the importance of education. He said: "If there is one priority for 1997, it is that the conspiracy of silence in education must be ended. All politicians, educationists and business leaders must turn their minds and their efforts to educating young people to play their full part in the world-beating economy and society we are creating."

Expounding the benefits of free markets, he said: "We have growth with low inflation, no significant trade problems and falling unemployment — we are very proud of Europe. We must keep it that way."

Mr Melville-Ross concluded: "If the economy continues to be managed in a disciplined and prudent way, if we recognise that international competitiveness is the key to a prosperous society and if we have confidence in ourselves, there is no reason why we shouldn't be world beaters."

Job hopes at their best for seven years

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITAIN'S job prospects now stand at a seven-year high, employment forecasts say today, suggesting a "prosperous" start to the new year.

The forecasts come in the wake of overall claimant unemployment falling just before the Christmas and new year holiday to below two million for the first time for six years, after a huge 95,800 monthly drop in seasonally adjusted unemployment — the biggest fall since current government records began a quarter of a century ago.

Manpower, the job agency, in its latest employment forecasts, which it claims prefigure the Government's later official data closely, says today that job prospects for the first quarter of 1997 are at the most favourable point since 1990.

Looking at a sample of almost 2,200 employers across the country, the Manpower survey — which is one of the longest-standing in Britain, having been running for more than 27 years — says that 21 per cent of employers are forecasting an increase in job

levels, with 15 per cent forecasting a fall. This net balance of 6 per cent is a three-point increase on the same period last year, and is the most optimistic first-quarter figure since 1990, Manpower says.

Manufacturing is the most optimistic sector, with a balance set at 15 per cent, with automotive manufacturing and general engineering even higher at balances of 28 and 21 per cent respectively. Telecomunications is the most optimistic sector, with a balance of a third of companies surveyed forecasting an increase in jobs.

The public and private building sectors both show increased job confidence, with a net 3 per cent of public employers in construction predicting increased employment, and a net 12 per cent in private building, in line with what is seen as a general upturn in the building industry as a whole.

Public sector job prospects overall are worse than the national average, with a balance of 7 per cent of employers saying jobs will decline. Regionally, the Manpower

survey shows employers in the South to be the most optimistic, with a net 15 per cent forecasting job growth. While prospects in London remain below the national average, they are continuing to improve.

Job prospects in Scotland are below the national average in the Manpower survey for the first time in 12 months, while the North East is the only region with a negative employment forecast, with a balance of 15 per cent of employers suggesting jobs will decrease over the next three months. The North West shows the greatest upturn.

Lillian Bennett, chairman of Manpower, said: "It is heartening to see the new year off to a good start. Apart from increased optimism over job prospects, there are also signs of a recovery in overall confidence and investment, particularly in training."

She hoped that the uncertainty surrounding the general election would do nothing to inhibit the recovery and that the momentum could be maintained to avoid skill shortages. B&Q, the chain of DIY stores, yesterday confirmed that it is to create 1,800 jobs this year at five new outlets in Coventry, Greater Manchester, Stockton-on-Tees, Merseyside and north London. The recruitment drive will increase the chain's workforce by 10 per cent, with the new jobs shared equally between full and part-time staff.



Porterbrook's sale to Stagecoach put Sandy Anderson on a fast track to £30 million

Buyouts rise to record £6.77bn

By FRANK LE DUC

MORE bosses took the first steps to becoming millionaires this year than ever before as the number of management buyouts and buy-ins rose to record levels.

The value of MBO and MBI deals also reached a new high, and a report due to be published today predicts the trend will continue in 1997.

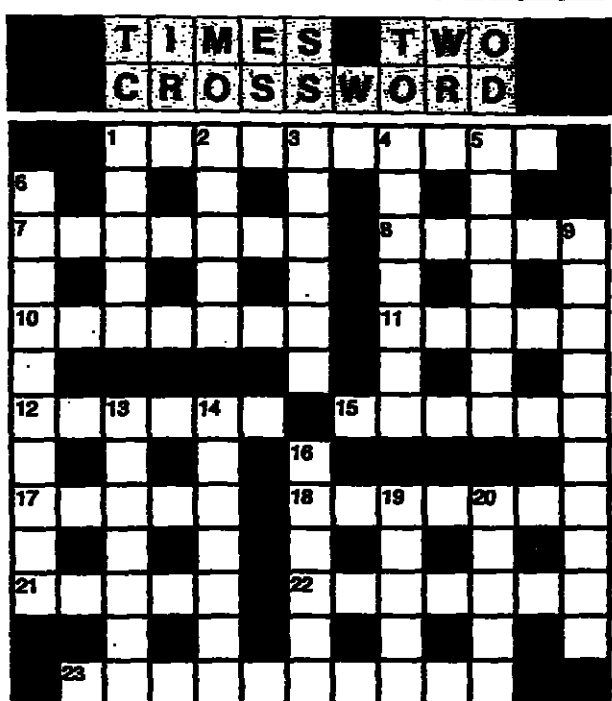
KPMG Corporate Finance estimates that about 600 buyouts and buy-ins were completed during the year with a total value of £6.77 billion, ahead of the record figure of £6.70 billion set last year.

Among the deals with the highest profile in 1996 was the controversial MBO of one of three privatised BR rolling stock companies by Porterbrook. Porterbrook was sold to Stagecoach for £825 million six months later. Sandy Anderson, who led the buyout, took more than £30 million of the staff's £80 million profit.

Others include Testing Services, which was bought out from Inchcape; Dunlop Slazenger which was sold to its managers by BTR; and Powerhouse, the electrical retailer bought out from Hanson.

Another report due out tomorrow, from the Centre for Management Buyout Research at the University of Nottingham, is expected to confirm the KPMG estimates.

Mike Stevens, head of MBO services at KPMG, said: "Underlying economic conditions and the weight of institutional liquidity point to another good year for MBOs in 1997. There may be a pause in sales of smaller private firms, but pressure on public companies to release shareholder value through selling non-core operations will continue."



No 977

ACROSS

- 1 In order to be different (3,1,6)
- 7 Thomas —, Prayer Book author (7)
- 8 Seed-planter; military movements (5)
- 10 Train of followers (7)
- 11 Wild animal (5)
- 12 With humorous, non-literal meaning (6)
- 15 Shooting star (6)
- 17 Capt. —, died to save Scott (5)
- 18 Very old (7)
- 21 Part of book cover: (porcupine) quill (5)
- 22 Medium-size warship (7)
- 23 One never silent (10)

DOWN

- 1 Sumptuous meal (5)
- 2 Vertical types old Latin-speaker (5)
- 3 Projecting weight-support; truss (6)
- 4 Within hearing (7)
- 5 Pained expression (7)
- 6 Obscenely abusive (10)
- 9 (Good) books (10)
- 13 Largest living bird (7)
- 14 Look carefully over (7)
- 16 Socially inept (6)
- 19 Bread fragment (5)
- 20 Country; favourite of Elizabeth I (5)

SOLUTION TO NO 976

ACROSS: 5 Anthropology 8 Trowel 9 Tycoon 10 Thaw 12 Perurb 14 Trotter 15 Tend 17 Punier 18 Cymbal 20 Chamber music

DOWN: 1 Carry through 2 Stew 3 Spatter 4 Black tie 6 Role 7 Good riddance 11 Antimony 13 Weather 16 Scam 19 Most

SOLUTION TO THE TIMES TWO NEW YEAR JUMBO
ACROSS: 1 Defiler 5 Sculpin 9 Relapse 15 A silver nutmeg and a golden pear 16 Law centre 17 Pelican 18 Emanating 19 Stand-in 21 Atmospheric 23 Diesel 24 Think again 26 Looks 28 Old Master 31 Troika 33 Chassis 35 Oasis 37 Crawl 40 Striker 41 In a manner of speaking 44 Lieutenant Commander 46 Unguent 48 Index 49 Mimus 51 Snippet 53 Skinny 54 Tourmedes 57 Recto 59 Opposition 62 Depths 64 Periphrasis 68 Abridge 70 Amplifier 71 Skired 73 Fruit tree 75 A travel, from an antique land 76 End user 77 Lantern 78 Overold

DOWN: 1 Dead loss 2 Fair-weather friend 3 Levee 4 Ruritania 5 Sun up 6 Angelus 7 Pinocchio 8 Learner 9 Re3-handed 10 Lineage 11 President 12 Enrage 13 Eureka 14 Come across 20 Dunkirk 22 Mona 25 Auction 26 Las Palmas 27 Scoured 28 Acres 30 Redgate 32 Acronym 34 San Marino 36 St Paul's 38 Alice-in-Wonderland 39 Palmist 42 Accuser 43 Foretop 45 Texan 47 Glitter 50 Noy Parker 52 Pious 53 Unexpired 56 Distiller 58 Capricorn 60 Status quo 61 Delighted 63 Thieves 66 Restful 68 Rat race 69 Safety 69 Palace 72 Drain 74 Theme

Update may cost Mercury £80m

By FRASER NELSON

MERCURY Communications could face a bill of up to £80 million to update its computers to process dates in the new millennium, as a legacy from its rush to enter the newly privatised telecommunications market in the Eighties.

Uwe Natho, Mercury's IT director, said the company has budgeted for £35 million to £40 million to be spent on the update, but said the bill could run to twice that amount. At present much of Mercury's software reads dates in two-digit format only. When

told that an account starts in 97 and ends in 01, uncorrected programmes will throw up an error message, deducing 01 is an earlier date than 97.

While older companies face larger bills, the sum came as a surprise to many in the industry who supposed that Mercury, which is only 12 years old, would run on more modern data storage software with a shelf life longer than 20 years.

Mr Natho said that in its haste to become established to compete against BT, Mercury bought software wherever it

could. "You name it, we've got it," he told *Computer Weekly*. "In 12 years, we've accumulated 422 applications. Our mobile business has its own customer, ordering, network management and billing systems. Mercury had to grow fast, so it bought everything quickly. Whenever there was an IT problem, we bought whatever was the best price."

Other companies are expected to follow suit in 1997. One report put the worldwide costs of correcting computers at £600 billion.

It's good to talk — properly

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

BT is set to spend "tens of millions of pounds" in an initiative with the dubious aim of tackling the alleged inability of British people to hold proper conversations.

The campaign, launched today, is likely to attract fierce criticism from millions of customers who will argue the money would be better used to cut the cost of telephone calls.

Last month BT announced a merger with MCI of America and the initiative — called TalkWorks — has borrowed heavily from the American self-improvement culture. It includes tips from Gerard Egan, Professor of Psychology at Loyola University, Chicago, on effective communication.

BT's drive to "transform the lives of people in the UK and equip us for the 21st century" is not entirely selfless, says John Turner of TalkWorks. "By encouraging communication we will grow the telecommunications market," he said. "It is a visionary leap as we approach the millennium."



Look who's talking now: Phillip Schofield, the presenter

Within five years, BT claims it will have taught millions of people "to get more out of life through better conversation". But sceptics may question whether the collective British stiff upper lip, maintained for hundreds of years, can be softened in a matter of months through a 98-page book sent free to 20 million households and an hour-long television

programme. Now *We're Talking*, presented by Phillip Schofield, is to be screened tonight. A BT spokeswoman said the project would bring a fresh approach to BT's current advertising campaign with the slogan, "It's good to talk." "People are increasingly bored with it," she confided, "and it must have damaged Bob Hoskins's acting career."

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